

Designing Empire: Austria and the Applied Arts, 1864-1918

by

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## Abstract

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This dissertation investigates how the political history, aesthetic practices, and critical reception of modern Viennese design sought to absorb and thereby sublimate ethnic tensions in the final decades of the Habsburg Empire. The opening chapter uncovers how Austrian political authorities and intellectuals re-interpreted visual manifestations of nationalism to advance and popularize the imperial mission beyond the establishment of schools and museums for the applied arts and into the private homes of imperial subjects. In the early writings of Alois Riegl, the influential art historian and museum curator argues that individual folk traditions ought to be industrialized for the urban market of the imperial capital. Writing a decade later, the art critic and salon hostess Berta Zuckerandl, in her essays on “authentic” and “inauthentic” folk art, problematizes the stylized utopian visions put forth by Riegl and others at the central Viennese applied arts institutions. Chapter 2 treats Emperor Franz Joseph’s Diamond Jubilee, an event which saw thousands of Austria-Hungary’s denizens descend upon Vienna’s famed *Ringstraße* to pay homage to the monarch on June 12, 1908. In orchestrating the Jubilee, imperial authorities handed the vital task of designing posters, commemorative objects, costumes, and floats to artists working with the imperial design program. This hopeful celebration of Austria’s multiethnic inheritance was intended to enact publicly the convergence of imperial and national concerns, but the modern and stylized designs of Viennese artists clashed with the more traditional, folk-inspired products of those from the provinces. Two key responses to this experiment in modern imperial spectacle were loud and scathing: for the architect Adolf Loos and the satirical journalist Karl Kraus, the event threw into question Vienna’s self-proclaimed status as a cosmopolitan center based on the amalgamation of pluralistic identities and modern aesthetics. Their visceral reactions to the Jubilee’s lateral display of both ornament and of the more “exotic” visitors from the crown lands form the basis of chapter 3. The polemical rhetoric of Kraus and Loos finds its way into Robert Musil’s *The Man Without Qualities* (1930-42). The fourth and final chapter demonstrates how modern design and Habsburg policy intersect in Musil’s novel within the foggy parameters of the so-called Parallel Action, a fictitious event celebrating Franz Joseph’s would-be Seventieth Jubilee in 1918.

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## INTRODUCTION

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In late-twentieth century London, two émigrés from Vienna turn to the applied arts as they reflect on their experiences of what one of them called “The Age of Empire” and what another celebrated Austrian writer called “The World of Yesterday.” Eric Hobsbawm (1917 - ), born in Egypt to a Viennese mother and a British father, spent much of his youth in the city that had recently ceased to be the capital of the centuries-old Habsburg Empire, while Ernst Gombrich (1909-2001) was born just in time to experience the parti-colored mosaic of the empire that soon broke into shards of singular tones. He recalls it in this reminiscence:

My mother loved and collected Slovak peasant embroideries. We eagerly waited for the visits to Vienna of a Slovak trader by the name of Matonicky, who used to come to the door and unpack his splendours of embroidered waistcoats, jackets, blouses, bonnets and ribbons. My mother’s means rarely extended beyond the latter two items, but we learned to admire the beauty of colours and the immense decorative tact and skill displayed in these embroideries. I well remember wondering why such works were not esteemed as ‘art’ in the same way as great paintings were. I also recall hearing that these pieces were doubly precious since they could never be produced again. The tradition was rapidly fading because modern aniline dyes had replaced the natural dyes and in any case the style of life which supported these homecrafts was disappearing...<sup>1</sup>

With this anecdote Gombrich opens his impressive study of the sensory implications of decorative art, *The Sense of Order* (1979). The image of the art historian’s mother (a former student of Anton Bruckner and an acquaintance of Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg) lingering over peasant crafts does not represent a naïve fascination with the “exotic” provincial on the part of the cosmopolitan elite, but rather suggests a far-ranging imperial scheme to promote the collection and production of design objects. In

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<sup>1</sup> E. H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1979) vii. Gombrich continues: “I mention these links because I have come to wonder whether another interest I developed whilst still a schoolboy was also connected with contemporary movements in Austria. Early on I had come to notice, to compare, to contrast and even to draw the decorative details of Viennese buildings...Adolf Loos had campaigned against [decorative façades], but at the same time public taste had rediscovered the beauty and vigour of Austrian Baroque architecture, which somehow became identified with the specifically Austrian heritage. I do not know whether any echoes of these discussions had influenced me, but as a teenager I certainly searched for the charming relics of this style in the suburbs of Vienna” (viii).

Hobsbawm's brilliant survey *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914*, the historian devotes his section on the arts of this period not to the exquisitely pompous portraiture and grand architecture normally associated with imperial power, but instead to what he calls "'the applied arts,' or arts used in real life."<sup>2</sup> Art nouveau, perhaps the most recognizable style of this era and closely associated with *fin-de-siècle* Vienna through the work of Gustav Klimt, "triumphed through furniture, motifs of interior decoration, and innumerable smallish domestic objects ranging from the expensive luxuries of Tiffany, Lalique and the Wiener Werkstätte to the table-lamps and cutlery which mechanical imitation spread through modest suburban homes. It was the first all-encompassing 'modern' style."<sup>3</sup> Hobsbawm makes sure to inform his readers that, while writing this statement, he stirs his cup of tea with a spoon made in Korea that bears the decorative motifs of the art nouveau style.<sup>3</sup>

One might ask what the trading of Slovak embroideries in early-twentieth-century Vienna has to do with a faux art nouveau Korean spoon used by a well-off resident of Hampstead in the late 1980s (aside from the fact that both are useful items of aesthetic value). And why is it, then, that both a psychological foray into the decorative arts and a political history of modern imperialism should display such affection for objects that have their visual roots in the final chapter of Habsburg rule in Central Europe? Gombrich and Hobsbawm belong to a generation slightly too young to have experienced *fin-de-siècle* Vienna in all its nostalgic glory, and the two scholars come from quite different intellectual traditions (Gombrich, an heir to the traditions of the Vienna School of Art History, dedicated most of his work to semiotics and visual psychology, whereas Hobsbawm has remained a staunch Marxist). There also is an obvious visual disjuncture between the handmade examples of colorful folk art so cherished by the wistful Gombrich and the sleek designs of international industrialism that Hobsbawm associates with this modern era. Perhaps Gombrich offers a clue as he speculates about the origins of Mr. Matonicky, that Slovak purveyor of handicrafts who brought so much joy to his mother: "I believe in fact that Mr. Matonicky had been sent to my mother by a relative whose villa had been built by the progressive Czech architect, Jan Kotěra, who had 'discovered' him."<sup>4</sup> Jan Kotěra (1871-1923), born in Brno to a Czech father and German-speaking mother, studied architecture in Vienna under the direction of Otto Wagner, the most famous of art nouveau architects; upon moving to Prague in 1897, Kotěra became a key figure in the development of Czech modernism through his work as both an architect and interior designer. The "discovery" of folk art by a modern designer should not be so surprising when one thinks about the awakening of modern nationalisms at the end of the nineteenth century, especially in those territories that had for centuries felt stifled by Habsburg imperial interests. What links folk art and modern design in this way, however, is the fact that political authorities, urban artists and regional craftsmen from across Austria-Hungary used folk art motifs and objects in a wider political and economic strategy to unite culturally the disparate elements under Habsburg administration around 1900. The delights of Mr. Matonicky's visits to the Gombrich family and the *Jugendstil* flourishes of Eric Hobsbawm's Korean spoon not only suggest the émigrés' predilection for the applied arts, but also reveal with great vivacity the enduring legacy of Habsburg efforts to design an empire.

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage, 1989) 229.

<sup>3</sup> Hobsbawm 230.

<sup>4</sup> Gombrich vii.

Defining the applied arts simply as “arts used in real life” may seem a bit vague, as does the alternative practice of compassing all such objects under the collective heading of “design.” As Jeremy Aynsley has pointed out quite rightly, “the English word ‘design’ only entered the German language in the post-war period...[yet] design had been recognized as an important cultural, industrial and commercial factor much earlier on.”<sup>5</sup> Ernst Gombrich also grappled with finding suitable terminology with which to discuss this all-encompassing idiom:

It so happens that the English language is both too rich and too poor in related terms to permit such a definition. In German the term *Ornament* would serve quite well...but to most speakers of English, ‘ornament’ conveys some knick-knack on the mantel-piece...The word ‘design’ tends to relate to technology and the term ‘decoration’ rather begs the question whether the practice with which I deal is simply one of adornment.<sup>6</sup>

The late-nineteenth-century concept of *Kunstgewerbe* also belongs to this grouping; often translated simply as “arts and crafts,” as related to the British movement of the 1880s, the term can also be rendered in English as “industrial arts,” a gloss that implies not only the artisanal but also the economic valence that was so central to this enterprise as Habsburg authorities imagined it. To uncover the breadth and variety of this undertaking as it played out in the Austro-Hungarian context, I consider widely disparate examples of *Kunstgewerbe*, comparing varieties and registers of design that are infrequently associated in studies of earlier art movements. The motifs range from the intricate vernacular patterns of traditional objects from the imperial and royal crown lands to the glossy surfaces of Wiener Werkstätte home wares; the projects include crockery, clothing, jewelry, furniture, advertisements, textiles, children’s toys, bookbindings, wallpaper, and postage stamps, as well as parades and pageants, murals, and architectural façades. All these compositions catch the fancy of the eyes and hands alike. Within the pages of this work, I attempt to avoid anachronism by referring to this category of aesthetic production with the historically specific terms that developed along with its several phases: the late-nineteenth-century *kunstgewerblich* enthrallment with folk motifs; the luxurious decorative pieces of Josef Hoffmann right at the turn of the century; Adolf Loos’s infamous attacks on *Ornament*; and the sweeping political attempts at popular, easily reproducible design during the final decade of Habsburg rule. All of these compositions and their variants are the results of careful designs by artists and artisans, many of whom were associated with imperial institutions founded specifically to support and advance the applied arts in the context of growing national movements. Although a lithographic poster may seem to have little in common with Transylvanian lace, and some strands of Central European applied arts may appear gilt while others frayed and faded, the base thread of a tightly woven Austrian imperial campaign run through them all.

By disengaging from paradigms of high culture and focusing equally on form and function, the applied arts infiltrated both public and private spaces, and thus gained the potential to transcend ethnic and social boundaries. The Arts and Crafts Movement in Great Britain, fostered by the utopian designer William Morris and his associates, and,

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremy Aynsley, *Designing Modern Germany* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009) 9.

<sup>6</sup> Gombrich x.

perhaps more significant for the Viennese style, the Glasgow School headed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, provided without a doubt the initial inspiration for many Austrian designers and craftsmen around 1900. At the same time, however, the rich folk traditions of Central and Eastern Europe contributed on both a stylistic and an ideological level to the distinctive designs of a group of imperial and royal cities, including the cultural centers of Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Krakow, and Timisoara. Artistic movements of this sort “sought to...transform the environment of daily living – from interior furnishings to house, and indeed village, city and landscape – rather than the self-contained sphere of the ‘fine arts’ for the rich and leisured.”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, such creative practices and products resulted in “an artistic ideology [that] thus became more than a fashion among creators and connoisseurs, because its commitment to social change linked it to the world of public institutions and reforming public authorities which could translate it into the public reality of art schools and redesigned or expanded cities or communities.”<sup>8</sup> The applied arts thus had the potential for both mass appeal and impressive geographical scope that suited them extraordinarily well to imperial ambitions. As the rapid industrialization of the nineteenth century gave way to twentieth-century modernism, artists and political authorities alike experimented earnestly with creative forms that would correspond to increasing cries for democratization and recognition of the individual, particularly within the volatile realms under Habsburg administration. At this critical juncture, design became a provocative and often contradictory vehicle for both the awakening of modern nationalisms and the molding of a supranational Austrian consciousness.

The parameters of this project do not allow for a careful and nuanced study of all aspects of applied arts production throughout the culturally diverse and spatially vast expanse of the Habsburg Empire. By illuminating how the central applied arts institutions in Vienna established the aesthetic and political foundations of this scheme, I hope to show how design became the critical medium through which key intellectual forces in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna – from imperial bureaucrats to visual artists and literary figures – created a vision of Austria’s inherently multiethnic and progressively modern character in contrast to the dissonant voices of nationalism. Eric Hobsbawm has made a convincing case for the dynamic potential of the applied arts during this era, a half century that proved to be so crucial for the development of global imperialisms: “The arts-and-crafts movement was disproportionately influential, because its impact automatically stretched beyond small circles of artists and critics, and because it inspired those who wished to change human life, not to mention practical men interested in producing structures and objects of use and in the relevant branches of education....”<sup>9</sup> This influential movement, which in visual terms has come to represent the refinement of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, was about much more than the exclusive writing desks designed by the Wiener Werkstätte and used by the Wittengstein family, or the opulent collaboration between Josef Hoffmann and Gustav Klimt on the Palais Stoclet in Brussels. As produced by a wide range of designers, the applied arts also extended into the very public realms of urban performance and advertising and into the most private spheres of domestic life, and thus came to embody the ideals of an aesthetic cohesion of form and function that would carry over into the everyday experiences of citizenship in Europe’s greatest contiguous empire.

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<sup>7</sup> Hobsbawm 229.

<sup>8</sup> Hobsbawm 229.

<sup>9</sup> Hobsbawm 229.

The notion that the leading figures behind Vienna's glittering age of modernism often stitched together visual culture and politics, only to rip the cloth apart again at its experimental seams, has been commonly accepted wisdom since Carl E. Schorske's seminal book *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* appeared in 1981. Schorske mentions the exclusive designs of the Wiener Werkstätte only briefly in his chapter on the arts, which he focuses on the case of Gustav Klimt and the 1899 scandal unleashed by a group of paintings that the University of Vienna commissioned from him and then found too shocking to display. Although Schorske argues that "while other European governments still shied away from modern art, the ancient Habsburg monarchy actively fostered it," he privileges the painting medium and subsequently declines to consider the political ramifications of art outside of the domain of traditional high culture around 1900.<sup>10</sup> In writing that "[t]he hero in this culture was the artist rather than the politician, and his genius was for introspection rather than domination," David Luft has also commented on the highly esteemed social role of the arts in this culture, but does not reflect on the ways in which politicians might have attempted to manipulate this aesthetically sensitive phenomenon to further an ethos of imperial harmony.<sup>11</sup> The work of these cultural historians has, however, been essential in making known the great and manifold cultural achievements of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, while surprisingly few art historians have engaged seriously with the close association between advancements in visual culture and politics in that context. Those who have done work on this period have devoted themselves largely to either the highly feminized, golden paintings of Klimt or to the trifecta of "Austrian Expressionism" – Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka and Richard Gerstl. And the first historians of design tended to disregard the Viennese applied arts as mere derivatives of the more "original" arts and crafts movements that took place in the British Isles and Germany at around the same time.<sup>12</sup>

More recently, two major museum exhibitions and their scholarly catalogues have reconsidered the role of the applied arts in the Central European realm: *Der Preis der Schönheit: 100 Jahre Wiener Werkstätte* (2003-2004) at the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna; and *International Arts and Crafts* (2005-2006), curated by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. In the MAK exhibition, the primary focus remained on the modernist objects created by artists of the Wiener Werkstätte and the position of such designs in an increasingly industrialized and capitalist state; however, on both the walls of the museum's galleries and the pages of the corresponding catalogue, there was no discussion of what this flourishing of modern design might have meant for Vienna's greater status as the multiethnic capital of a major world power. The V&A show demonstrated the connection between modern national consciousness and applied arts movements, yet failed to consider how these vital movements engaged with or clashed against the frequently imperial contexts in which they were emerging. In an essay published in the exhibition catalogue, Andrzej Szczerski focuses on how Hungarian and Polish artists in particular fashioned an impressive body of modern design on their

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<sup>10</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981) 237.

<sup>11</sup> David Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture, 1880-1942* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 12.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Nikolaus Pevsner's seminal contribution to the field of design history, first published in 1936: *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

respective folk traditions, but he does not mention that Habsburg authorities based in Vienna were the ones who created the very institutional structures responsible for such craft-based output.<sup>13</sup> David Crowley, in his work on the vernacular revival in Central Europe around 1900, addresses the conflation of modern practices and ethnographic undertakings at the time when Magyar and Slavic artists were striving to break free from the characteristically stuffy influence of the German-Austrian House of Habsburg. Although Crowley does touch on the diverse national and imperial manifestations of the applied arts scheme in the Austro-Hungarian context by considering how the folk arts of the crown lands became quaint display pieces for the eyes of the Viennese public in the 1873 World Exhibition, one wonders how the discourses of industry, the political state, and imperial cultures might have collided under the auspices of that event, which in fact functioned as a dynamic catalyst for Austria's modernization.<sup>14</sup>

This study seeks to demonstrate how the applied arts program seeped into the fabric of Austro-Hungarian cultural life, saturating not only the minds of imperial authorities and pedagogues, but providing art critics, political journalists, theorists of ornament, and literary figures a bold palette with which to paint their distinctive flourishes and a common point of reference for their various critiques. One might be tempted to argue that, in the end, the scheme's utopian aims proved to be in vain, that the attempts to forge cultural understanding through a policy based on ornamentation failed to unite the diverse peoples of the empire before the dark days of 1914. Such an assessment, however, would be unproductive in its reliance upon backshadowing, and my task is decidedly not to suggest that this enterprise failed to prevent the outbreak of World War I. Instead, I propose that by addressing and analyzing the experimental (and, for the most part, overwhelmingly positive) character of this imperial endeavor, we can understand better the function and surprisingly long-lived appeal of the design objects that have come to stand for Vienna 1900 and continue to recall it to the plethora of present-day tourists who scour the shops on Kärntnerstraße for mementos. To this day Koloman Moser-inspired writing utensils and Carl Otto Czeschka-inspired jewelry immediately invoke Vienna's glorious heyday as the seat of the Habsburg Empire. It is also essential to understand, however, why and how these designers emerged from the cultural and economic trajectory of Austria-Hungary's deliberate program of art and industry in the late nineteenth century. The applied arts, including traditional folk crafts and the most modern streamlined designs, exemplified the genuine aspirations of artists and imperial bureaucrats to find a common tool with which to preserve and weld together the unique patterns featured throughout the crown lands, and so produce mosaics that would dazzle on the world stage. If these designers "they did not achieve... the actual cultural revolution of the twentieth century they aimed at,"<sup>15</sup> it is of no importance. By introducing the concerns and the visual traditions of the ethnically diverse public to artists and artisans, imperial design infused the modern Austrian consciousness with a keen aesthetic awareness of everyday objects and of the façades of empire.

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<sup>13</sup> Andrzej Szczerski, "Central Europe" in Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry, eds., *International Arts and Crafts* (London: V & A Publications, 2005) 238-251.

<sup>14</sup> David Crowley, "The Aesthetics and Politics of the Vernacular Revival in Central Europe around 1900" in Francis Ames-Lewis and Piotr Paszkiewicz, eds., *Art and Politics* (Warsaw: Institute of Art, 1999) 115-125. For a fine detailed account of national dynamics and modern design in the Polish lands under Habsburg rule, see David Crowley, *National Style and Nation-State: Design in Poland from the Vernacular Revival to the International Style* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Hobsbawm 236.



I begin this exploration by unearthing the historical foundations of applied arts institutions in the Habsburg Empire. In 1862 the Austrian art historian Rudolf von Eitelberger visited London's then newly-established South Kensington Museum and returned to Vienna with a plan to revitalize the aging Habsburg Empire. Two years later he and Emperor Franz Joseph founded the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry and its associated School of Arts and Crafts to promote the collection, study, and design of objects representing the cultural wealth of the Habsburg territories. Imperially sponsored programs for the applied arts soon appeared throughout the monarchy; within a span of fifteen years, satellite schools and museums outside of the two Habsburg capitals were established in the urban centers of the crown lands, including Prague, Brno, Zagreb, Krakow, Lviv and Chernivtsi. Students at these institutions received foundational training in the traditional craft practices of their particular regions; but in accordance with the pedagogical techniques developed at the Viennese institutions, they also learned to stylize folk-based motifs to a certain level of modern abstraction in order to develop a common visual style that could help to forge a cohesive cultural-political state. Alois Riegl, the influential art historian and theorist of ornament, was at that time head curator of the Vienna museum's textile department. Drawing from his early experiences living in and traversing the easternmost imperial territories of Bukovina and Galicia, he argues that, in the name of cross-cultural understanding and economic progress, individual folk traditions ought to be industrialized for the urban market of the imperial capital. In the long run, this practice would result in the absorption and subsequent sublimation of nationalist sentiment in the provinces through the introduction of a supranational design aesthetic that would include and then abstract motifs found in the respective folk traditions of the crown lands. Writing a decade later, the art critic and salon hostess Berta Zuckerkandl praises the triumphant foray of modern Viennese artists into the realm of arts and crafts, yet at the same time she problematizes, in her essays on "authentic" and "inauthentic" folk art, the stylized utopian visions put forth by Riegl and others at the central Viennese applied arts institutions. The voices of the *Jugendstil* architect Otto Wagner and the Wiener Werkstätte co-founder Josef Hoffmann serve to bridge the gap between the administrative and theoretical concerns of imperial politicians and pedagogues on the one hand, and Riegl and Zuckerkandl on the other.

Chapter 2 focuses on Emperor Franz Joseph's Diamond Jubilee in 1908. The opening of the *Kunstschau* took place on June 1, 1908: members of the Wiener Werkstätte dominated the exhibition, which functioned as an aesthetic framing device for the year's events. The morning of June 12, 1908 saw thousands of Austria-Hungary's denizens descend upon Vienna's famed *Ringstraße* to pay homage to the monarch on the occasion of his sixtieth year on the Habsburg throne. The day's program featured two spectacular events: a historical parade that highlighted the imperial legacy of the House of Habsburg, and a "parade of nations" meant to celebrate the present-day Empire's multiethnic composition. In orchestrating the 1908 Jubilee, imperial authorities had handed the vital task of designing posters, commemorative objects, costumes, and floats to artists working with the imperial design program, many of whom were still students at the School for Arts and Crafts and were required to produce designs for the Jubilee as class assignments. This hopeful celebration of Austria's multiethnic inheritance was intended to enact publicly the convergence of imperial and national concerns, but the modern and stylized designs of Viennese artists clashed with the more traditional, folk-inspired products of those from the

crown lands. The resultant cacophony on the pavement of Vienna's most modern boulevard pointed up the inherent cultural, economic, and political incongruities of the faltering Habsburg state in a most visual way.

While some, including that great spokesman for the Vienna Secession, Ludwig Hevesi, applauded the event for its colorful and vibrant display of contemporary Austria, two key responses to this experiment in modern imperial spectacle were loud and scathing: for the architect Adolf Loos and the satirical journalist Karl Kraus, the event threw into question Vienna's self-proclaimed status as a cosmopolitan center based on the interweaving of pluralistic identities and modern aesthetics. Their visceral reactions to the Jubilee's display of both ornament and of the more "exotic" visitors from the crown lands form the basis of chapter 3. Kraus's journalistic treatises on the bureaucratic planning for and execution of the parade expose the degenerate nature of the Habsburg state, from its crumbling political framework to the clumsy physical bodies that inhabit the most provincial corners of the empire. The tenuous attempts on the part of the Jubilee organizers to make the delicate structure of Austrian imperial culture appear as robust as the hearty national expressions of the peasant population send Kraus into a fiery rage, as he explains the many levels on which the visual incongruity of this spectacle reveals the very real social issues that have arisen out of the efforts to merge art and industry. Adolf Loos, a close friend of Kraus's, refers specifically to the 1908 Jubilee parade in his most famous essay, "Ornament and Crime," in which he argues that excessive ornamentation contributes to a precarious stunting of cultural progress in the modern world. Loos extends this critique beyond "Ornament and Crime," and in a series of further essays he demands a serious reconsideration of the very notion of "applied arts." For the Brno-born architect, the decorative forms produced by the Wiener Werkstätte artists are an insult to the simple (and therefore more genuine as well as more modern) work of the artisan, who engages in high quality and resourceful craftsmanship. The social effects of modern design are in his view detrimental to Austria's position as a leading modern state; by promoting applied arts production throughout the empire, Habsburg authorities are, in essence, digging their own graves and bringing the entire population of the empire down with them. From the virulent attacks of these two critics on the prominent display of ornamentation in both public and private contexts within the imperial capital, one may assume that neither Kraus nor Loos would have spared the Gombrich family for its enthusiasm over the Slovak peasant embroideries that their beloved Mr. Matonicky imported from its ethnic setting into the urban center of Vienna.

The polemical rhetoric of Kraus and Loos is reflected in Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* (1930-42). By interweaving these critical voices with the aesthetic and bureaucratic discourses of a Vienna that never gets past the year 1913, Musil delivers his own scathing critique of late imperial practices of design. In the fourth and final chapter I explore the intersection of modern Austrian art and Habsburg policy in Musil's novel, largely as this vortex manifests itself within the foggy parameters of the so-called Parallel Action. Musil augments his skillful rendering of the caricatured organization of a fictitious imperial Jubilee in 1918 with meditations on interior design and the stylized lifestyles of the novel's characters. Using questions of design as an approach to literary analysis, I demonstrate how the mid-nineteenth-century foundations of the Austrian applied arts project come full circle in the post-World War I masterpiece of modernist Austrian literature.

Before venturing into the intricate world of Austro-Hungarian imperial design, it is worth turning for a brief moment to Oscar Wilde, a favorite in the cultured bourgeois circles of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. In his 1891 piece “The Critic as Artist,” Wilde wrote the following about the power of decorative art:

The art that is frankly decorative is the art to live with. It is, of all visible arts, the one art that creates in us both mood and temperament. Mere colour, unspoiled by meaning, and unallied with definite form, can speak to the soul in a thousand different ways. The harmony that resides in the delicate proportions of lines and masses becomes mirrored in the mind. The repetitions of patterns give us rest. The marvels of design stir the imagination. In the mere loveliness of the materials employed there are latent elements of culture. Nor is this all...[D]ecorative art not merely prepares the soul for the reception of true imaginative work, but develops in it that sense of form which is the basis of creative no less than of critical achievement.<sup>16</sup>

Wilde’s high regard for the decorative arts resonates strongly with the hopeful visions of political authorities and applied artists who were intent on quelling the divisive political winds that were whirling throughout the multinational state. In the late nineteenth century, design became at once a restful and invigorating enterprise that draped itself across the increasingly feeble body of the Habsburg Empire, giving that eclectic culture a touch of both dizzying glamour and rooted earthiness. This unique undertaking, decidedly bureaucratic in nature while typically Viennese in its thirst for playful creativity, promised the possibility of piecing together from fragments of different shapes and colors a stunning utilitarian objective in which all the empire’s subjects could find delight and reason. The complex and sometimes tense reception of this program only serves to highlight its position as a grand experimental gesture that struck the imaginative and practical capacities of the mind to an overwhelming extent. In designing their empire, artists, academics, craftsmen, cultural critics, and political figures alike found themselves perhaps unexpectedly in overlapping and common positions throughout the crown lands, only to converge time and again in the filigree patterns of the Austrian state.

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<sup>16</sup> Oscar Wilde, “The Critic as Artist (1891)” in Richard Ellmann, ed. *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde* (London: W. H. Allen, 1970) 398.

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Crafting Empire: Austrian Institutions and Theories of Applied Arts

The Imperial and Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (*K.k. Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie*) opened its doors in 1864, two years after Vienna's first art historian, Rudolf von Eitelberger, visited the World's Fair in London. While in the British capital, Eitelberger had become acquainted with the South Kensington Museum, established in 1857 in an effort to promote the study and collection of applied arts not only from England, but from all the outlying territories of the British Empire as well. Upon returning to Vienna, Eitelberger suggested to Archduke Rainer, the brother of Franz Joseph, that they undertake a similar enterprise in Austria; the two soon convinced the emperor to sanction the foundation of the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry. The Habsburg government supported Eitelberger in his recommendation that the museum be established in order to improve the design of objects for daily use; and the statutes for the museum, dictated by the emperor himself on March 31, 1864, defined its several goals, including the advancement of a uniquely Austrian art industry and, through it, the creation of an Austrian national identity. The British had already modeled other successful museums throughout their empire, from Bombay to Toronto, on the pattern on the one in South Kensington. In the Habsburg Empire, the Museum of Art and Industry and its associated School of Arts and Crafts (*Kunstgewerbeschule*), opened in 1867, the same year as the Compromise (*Ausgleich*) with Hungary that instituted the Dual Monarchy. This was followed by the establishment of similar enterprises in some of the Empire's most important urban centers, on both sides of the Leitha<sup>1</sup>: Budapest (1872), Brno (1873) and Prague (1884). The connection between empire and the promotion of the applied arts is significant in both these imperial contexts, since the establishment of such museums and schools stresses the imperial urge to house and display distinctive objects from all the Empire's territories and to encourage new forms of production in order to forge a unifying imperial identity.

Rudolf von Eitelberger, art historian and founder of the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry, describes his considerations in the following statement:

Fast scheint es, als ob Zeichnung und Farbe auch bei uns ein Mittel würde, die Völker zu trennen und nicht zu verbinden. Daß die Sprache ein

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<sup>1</sup> The terms *Cis-* and *Transleithania* are used to designate the halves of the Dual Monarchy under Austrian and Hungarian administration, respectively. It refers to the River Leitha on the Austrian-Hungarian border.

völkerscheidendes Element geworden ist, das ist leider wohl kein Zweifel mehr. Jede Stärkung des sprachlichen Conflictes erhöht die Scheidewand zwischen den Völkern. Aber bisher war man der Ansicht, daß eben die Kunst dasjenige Element sei, welches die Völker vereinige. Denn eine Zeichnung, ein Gemälde, spricht zu jedem gleich, ist jedem gleichmäßig verständlich und zugänglich.<sup>2</sup>

While Eitelberger does not in this essay refer specifically to the applied arts, one can infer that the crafts taught in the schools of Arts and Crafts would not only have promoted a universally intelligible visual language, which could be understood throughout the Habsburg Empire, but that their focus on functionality would have given this language the potential to enter each household in the monarchy, regardless of ethnic and social boundaries. This notion will serve as the basis for considering the function of the applied arts as an integrative medium designed to unite the disparate elements of the Habsburg *Vielvölkerstaat*.

### Schools of Arts and Crafts (*Kunstgewerbeschulen*)



**Fig. 1**  
**Alphons Mueller, Map of the *gewerbliche Fachschulen* in the Habsburg Empire**  
**(Im Auftrag des K.k. Ministeriums für Cultus und Unterricht)**

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf von Eitelberger, “Die Kunstbestrebungen Österreichs” (1871) in *Gesammelte Kunsthistorische Schriften*, vol. II (Vienna, 1879) 196-97.

Schools of Arts and Crafts in the monarchy represent the first concrete attempt to develop a supranational Austrian aesthetic through the development of modern design and the advancement of the applied arts. By 1876, there were nine state-sponsored schools in *Cisleithania* outside of the imperial capital – in Salzburg, Graz, Prague, Plzeň (German: *Pilsen*), Liberec (German: *Reichenberg*), Brno, Krakow and Czernowitz;<sup>3</sup> this list of cities stresses that this initiative did not just take place on “German” territory – the inclusion of Krakow and Czernowitz, in particular, make the project all the more “imperial” in scope. There was a hierarchy among the schools, with the Vienna establishment predictably at the top. The different schools emphasized specific crafts, sometimes related to the natural resources and traditions of the regions in which they were established (e.g., glass in Bohemia, lace in Slovakia). The best students from around the empire were invited to Vienna in the hope of promoting a greater imperial identity through the creation of aesthetically-pleasing objects for household use. Students learned first how to produce the traditional provincial forms and motifs, and then how to “stylize” them in order to create abstracted, modern counterparts of the traditional designs.<sup>4</sup>

Careful planning ensured the effective establishment of such schools throughout the Habsburg-administered crown lands. This is evident in the 1876 book by the art historian Albert Ilg, *Die kunstgewerblichen Fachschulen des k.k. Handelsministerium*,<sup>5</sup> published in connection with an exhibition of the same name at the Museum of Art and Industry. Ilg (1847-1896) was a curator at the *Kunsthistorisches Museum* and is perhaps best known for having written the first monograph on Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, which established his reputation as a key promoter of the Neo-Baroque as the Austrian national style and demonstrated further his commitment to the project of determining a uniquely Austrian identity in the visual arts. In the preface Ilg alludes to the political implications of officially promoting the Arts and Crafts:

Oder es erheischt im andern Falle eine von der Einwohnerschaft eines Bezirkes oder einer Ortschaft in volksthümlicher Weise, seit längerer Zeit betriebene Hausindustrie, welche durch die einer solchen in der Regel ungünstigen Verhältnisse der Gegenwart geschädigt erscheint, eine entsprechende fachliche Unterstützung durch Hebung der Bildung in ästhetischer und technischer Beziehung, wodurch die sonst allmählig ersterbende primitive und naive Volksthätigkeit in eine praktische und rationelle umgewandelt werden soll.<sup>6</sup>

Ilg explains that a key purpose of the imperial program is to support the long established cottage industries in regions where they have suffered due to current (one infers economic)

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<sup>3</sup> See Franz Ritter von Haymerle’s introduction to *Centralblatt für das gewerbliche Unterrichtswesen* 1 (Vienna, 1888) 9.

<sup>4</sup> For more details on instruction within the *Kunstgewerbeschulen*, see Diana Reynolds’s essay “Die österreichische Synthese” in Peter Noever, ed. *Kunst und Industrie: Die Anfänge des Museums für angewandte Kunst in Wien* (Vienna: MAK, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Albert Ilg, *Die kunstgewerblichen Fachschulen des k.k. Handelsministerium; anlässlich der im October 1875 im k.k. Österr. Museum für Kunst und Industrie veranstalteten Ausstellung derselben* (Vienna: Lehmann und Wentzel, 1876).

<sup>6</sup> Ilg v.

circumstances. Imperial support would raise the educational level of the artisans in both aesthetic and technical terms. In this way the “moribund, primitive, and naïve” folk arts (*Volksthätigkeit*) would be put on a practical and rational footing. He continues, “Andererseits war zur Errichtung unserer Lehranstalten in denjenigen Gegenden ein Anlass geboten, wo auf specieller Grundlage einer in der Bevölkerung sporadisch vorhandenen Thätigkeit oder sonstiger Vorbedingungen eine Hausindustrie kunstgewerblicher Richtung geweckt werden soll.”<sup>7</sup> This statement emphasizes further the need for training in the applied arts to “awaken” a certain sense of household industry by building on the local enterprises that were already present here and there across the monarchy. A word commonly associated with the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century, an “awakening” would signify the possibility of collective change through a state supported promotion of household industry (*Hausindustrie*).

Ilg comments that until now, many schools of Arts and Crafts have been on (largely German-speaking) Austrian soil: Tyrol and Vorarlberg with twelve, Carinthia and Upper Austria with three each, Lower Austria and Moravia with one each, and Bohemia with seventeen. Concerning the other crown lands (there are seventeen in total at this time, including the Kingdom of Hungary), the Ministry of Commerce (*Handelsministerium*) already has eager plans to erect such schools in those territories. This connection to the Ministry of Commerce highlights the importance of cross-cultural exchange in this program and simultaneously acknowledges that these are individual cultures that should be considered diplomatically and valued on their terms; upon becoming director of the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry in 1898, Arthur von Scala transferred the collections of the Museum of Commerce (*Handelsmuseum*) to his new museum.

Ilg organizes the book according to the various departments represented at the schools, including woodcutting and stonecutting, the glass and clay industries, and textile design. He boasts about the variety of resources throughout the empire, emphasizing its vastness and illustrating how the applied arts can function within the imperial program. He also stresses that Austria-Hungary has both impressive natural resources and modern industrial resources (represented particularly well in the crown lands of Bohemia and Moravia), in a statement that asserts the Empire’s character as being natural and *heimisch*, as well as modern and industrial – such a claim that should appeal to all ethnicities and social groups.

In the chapter “Die Fachzeichnen- und Modellschule in Verbindung mit Lehrwerkstätten für Holzschnitzerei und für Silber-Filigranarbeiten in Cortina d’Ampezzo,” Ilg writes about the production of national jewelry within the schools of Arts and Crafts:

Nur in wenigen Provinzen des Kaiserstaates hat sich die Vorliebe der Bevölkerung für nationalen Schmuck, das Tragen und somit auch die Erzeugung desselben erhalten. Die Weltausstellung 1873 hat davon deutlich Rechenschaft gegeben, sie hat nur für Salzburg das Silberfiligranen, für Böhmen den Granatschmuck und für die südöstlichen Länder an der Donau ebenfalls das Vorkommen eines ziemlich derben, theils aus Silberblech geschnitten, theils mit Münzen in Verbindung gesetzten und theils filigranirten Schmuckes gewiesen. Hiezu kommt etwa noch der Gebrauch

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<sup>7</sup> Ilg v. My emphasis.



der sogenannten Kropfperlen in mehreren deutschen Kronländern, sowie der einschlägige Gegenstand der vorliegenden Abtheilung, und *das Ganze von nationalem Schmuck, das bei unseren Völkerstämmen noch anzutreffen ist, dürfte erschöpft sein.*<sup>8</sup>

Ilg still believes that although much of traditional jewelry industry (*Schmuckindustrie*) seems to be dying out, it does maintain many valuable features that can be used for the greater good of jewelry manufacture (*Schmuckfabrication*). He acknowledges that it is not in all of the crown lands that the population still wears and produces national jewelry, although the Empire had given a good account of itself in that craft at the 1873 World's Fair in Vienna. The use of the subjunctive in the final sentence of this passage is key; the national jewelry of the various peoples residing in the empire might be at the point of extinction. Here Ilg gives the impression that this imperial program generously allows some autonomy to its peoples, particularly in that they are still allowed to create (as opposed to simply preserve) objects connected to their respective "national" cultures. He clearly promotes this idea in the following statement: "So verhält es sich nun auch in der That; so ist mehrfach Gelegenheit geboten, eine gering betriebene und absterbende nationale Schmuckindustrie mit Benützung ihrer mannigfachen werthvollen Eigenthümlichkeiten für die Schmuckfabrication im allgemeinen Sinne nutzbar zu machen."<sup>9</sup> Industrialization does indeed have its advantages for the preservation of individual cultural heritages. This line of thought provides an excellent segue into the early work of Alois Riegl, who not only worked as a curator in the textile department at the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry and was therefore regularly exposed to the project of the schools of Arts and Crafts, but who also envisioned the industrialization of national design in highly theoretical terms.

### **Alois Riegl and the Industrialization of Austrian Identity**

Alois Riegl (1858-1905) is perhaps best known for establishing the Vienna School of Art History with Franz Wickhoff. Born in Linz and raised by his father, a tobacco company official, Riegl had a very different upbringing from that of his German-Austrian and classically-trained colleague.<sup>10</sup>

In the essay "Alois Riegl," his student and successor Max Dvořák<sup>11</sup> devotes an entire section to the project of overcoming the cultural historical direction in art history. In it he discusses the potential of Riegl's early work for the cultural scheme his teacher was familiar with, that of a multiethnic Austria-Hungary. Although he was born in largely German Linz and spent some early years in Krems, Riegl had indeed traveled in the empire

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<sup>8</sup> Ilg 148. My emphasis.

<sup>9</sup> Ilg 149.

<sup>10</sup> See Max Dvořák, "Franz Wickhoff" in Max Dvořák, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kunstgeschichte* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1929) 299-312. About his teacher Dvořák writes, "Über seine äußeren Lebensschicksale ist wenig zu berichten. Er war im Jahre 1853 geboren, studierte in Kremsmünster, Krems und Wien, wurde nach Vollendung seiner Studien am Österreichischen Museum angestellt und wirkte vom Jahre 1882 an an der Wiener Universität. Im Jahre 1909 ist er in Venedig einer langjährigen Krankheit erlegen" (299).

<sup>11</sup> Max Dvořák (1874-1921), an art historian originally from Bohemia (Raudnitz, present-day Roudnice nad Labem in the Czech Republic), succeeded his teachers Riegl and Wickhoff at the University of Vienna.

and encountered its multifaceted composition. Dvořák tells us that Riegl's father was transferred to Zablatów in Galicia, and then to other parts of this easternmost crown land; Riegl attended *Gymnasium* in Kolomea and Stanislau, before the family moved back to Linz upon his father's death in 1873.

This early exposure to Galicia may account for what I believe to be a primary distinction between the work and intellectual concerns of Riegl and Wickhoff, at least at the beginning of Riegl's career.<sup>12</sup> After being unsatisfied with his study of law, philosophy and *Universalgeschichte* at the University of Vienna, Riegl turned to the relatively new field of Art History, where he grappled with the aesthetically and historically dogmatic works of figures such as Gottfried Semper and Jacob Burckhardt. The former had claimed that artistic forms were contingent solely upon the qualities of raw materials (i.e. certain motifs are unique to basketweaving due to the texture of the straw used and the natural designs of the weaving process), while the latter promoted an aesthetic hierarchy that placed the art of the Italian Renaissance on a pedestal above all other cultural moments.<sup>13</sup> Dvořák continues, "Das was Riegl in der alten Polyhistorie nicht finden konnte, fand er auf dem Wege exakter Untersuchung, weite universalgeschichtliche Zusammenhänge."<sup>14</sup> Frustrated by this trend, Riegl began working as a volunteer at the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry in 1886; one year later, he became the curator of the museum's textile department, a position he enjoyed for 11 years. Dvořák recounts that when Riegl permanently left this position for the academy, "[e]r klagte nie und klagte noch weniger jemanden an, doch war er, einer der erfolgreichsten Forscher seiner Wissenschaft, damals so unglücklich und unzufrieden als nur möglich. 'Ich habe keinen Beruf,' sagte er oft."<sup>15</sup> Riegl's intellectual being was clearly intertwined with the personal relationships he formed with objects in the museum's collection.

Since the 1862 World's Fair in London, "oriental" art had become extremely fashionable; Dvořák writes:

[D]a man von ihrer geschichtlichen Entstehung nichts wußte und sich darum auch nicht kümmerte, konnte man sie unangefochten für die sonderbarsten geschichtlichen und ästhetischen Theorien ausbeuten, ähnlich wie es einst, bevor die Gesetze der Chemie bekannt und allgemein verbreitet gewesen sind, die Alchimisten mit chemischen Prozessen getan haben.<sup>16</sup>

In light of such trends, Riegl set out to reveal the substance of such "novelized" art forms, analyzing their respective histories, conventions and receptions in an effort to promote understudied idioms, particularly those of the decorative arts. His early connection to Galicia and recognition of the importance of folk art forms for these easternmost territories

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<sup>12</sup> We will especially see how the diverse lands of Austria-Hungary influenced Riegl in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie* (1894).

<sup>13</sup> Dvořák 282. Semper was also the architect of some of the more prominent buildings on Vienna's Ringstraße: the *Burgtheater* (1873-1888), the *Kunsthistorisches Museum* (1872-1881) and the *Naturhistorisches Museum* (1872-1881). It is also noteworthy that Riegl attacked the works of a German and a Swissman in his creation of a more "universal" Art History in Austria.

<sup>14</sup> Dvořák 284.

<sup>15</sup> Dvořák 289.

<sup>16</sup> Dvořák 286.

of the Habsburg Empire are most evident in his 1894 treatise *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*.

At the end of his short life Riegl was best known to his contemporaries as the *Generalkonservator der Zentralkommission Hofrat*, a position which allowed him to engage with the preservation and erection of monuments around Austria. His early work, with the exception of *Stilfragen* (1893), however, remains largely understudied. It is Riegl's focus on ornamentation and his own cultural moment that connect moments in his biography to his unique perspective on the state of folk art and its relationship to the popular rise of the applied arts at the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. A brief look at *Stilfragen* and *Spätromische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn* (1901) allows us to contextualize the more obscure *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie* within Riegl's theoretical work and intellectual concerns.

Riegl's position at the Austrian Museum of Industry is reflected in his early work on ornamentation and the decorative arts. As of 1893 he had introduced the highly influential notion of *Kunstwollen* (translated roughly as “the will to art” and the subject of unending interpretation)<sup>17</sup> in *Stilfragen*, stressing that each age and culture bears its own unique artistic forms and intentions (a notion that is quite similar to the Secessionist motto – “Der Zeit ihre Kunst, der Kunst ihre Freiheit”). While this text of Riegl's in effect championed the cause of the Secessionists and other reformers of the arts, it did not have the direct political implications of his 1894 treatise *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless this earlier work reveals much about the politicized agenda of modern visual culture in Austria-Hungary around the turn of the century and about the attempt to create a multiethnic imperial identity by means of a program of modern design, springing largely from folk traditions from around the empire.

Riegl's work as textile curator seeps into the introduction to the book *Stilfragen* (1893), in which he considers the history of ornamentation and its role in the decorative arts, striving to place this understudied idiom alongside the “higher” canonical arts of painting and sculpture. It is also in this work that he first uses the term *Kunstwollen* in order to stress the unique artistic forms and intentions of a particular age in relation to its cultural context. An acceptance of *Kunstwollen* would allow for the constant transformation of art as opposed to conservative conceptions of aesthetic progress and regression, thus creating a sense of the visual that recognizes the historical, culturally-specific conventions of a given artistic genre. Riegl argues that common ornamental motifs in the decorative arts (e.g. the tendril, the acanthus, the arabesque) have only developed over the centuries due to cultural transfer, and he structures his explanation around

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<sup>17</sup> In *The Sense of Order*, Ernst Gombrich translates *Kunstwollen* as either “the will to art” or “the will to form,” depending on the context. In discussing the general ethos out of which Riegl coined the term, Gombrich writes, “It was this materialism [the role played by technique as proposed by Semper], this disregard of the aesthetic and psychological urges underlying artistic creativity, which Riegl wanted to put out of court by his demonstration of a millennial development... That ‘will to art,’ which Riegl had conceived as an alternative to the mechanistic explanations of individual motifs, developed into a vitalistic principle underlying the whole history of art” (193).

<sup>18</sup> For an excellent and thorough discussion of this text, its immediate reception and its position within the fields of Art History and Cultural Studies, see Georg Vasold, *Alois Riegl und die Kunstgeschichte als Kulturgeschichte: Überlegungen zum Frühwerk des Wiener Gelehrten* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2004).

classical and medieval examples from various cultures that had encountered each other over time (i.e. Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Persian, Arabic).

Riegl conceived *Stilfragen* during a period of substantial archaeological excavation and attempts to catalogue and classify the visual traditions of ancient cultures; but until he tackled the issue of historical ornamentation, the line of thought propagated by Gottfried Semper reigned: “[f]ormal or stylistic analogies in geometric and stylized vegetal and animal ornament appeared simply as the passive result of common technologies and mimetic skills; they were thereby rendered meaningless in historical terms, incapable of being understood as vestiges or evidence of artistic transmission or diffusion.”<sup>19</sup> Riegl’s notion of *Kunstwollen*, by contrast, demonstrates that artists make quite deliberate choices in their work, stressing the degree to which the agency of the individual artist contributes to the creative process of ornamentation. *Stilfragen* does not exclude the possibility of cultural transfer that Riegl will emphasize a year later in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*; it rather addresses the reciprocal nature of *Kunstwollen* and cultural transfer: “In the hands of a creative artist, traditional forms could also be mutated to produce innovations as they were handed down or diffused transculturally.”<sup>20</sup>

In the first sentences of *Stilfragen*, Riegl acknowledges the radicalism of the considerations he is about to put forth: “‘Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik’ kündigt der Titel als Inhalt dieses Buches an. Wie Mancher mag da schon bei Lesung des Umschlags misstrauisch die Achseln zucken! Giebt es denn auch eine Geschichte der Ornamentik?”<sup>21</sup> He bases his historical and theoretical work on the ornamental facets of actual forms and objects he has studied with care, specifically those in the textile collection at the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry.<sup>22</sup> This professional experience has led him to a better understanding of such objects, and he attacks Semper in his first use of the term *Kunstwollen*: “Gottfried Semper... [wäre] wohl der letzte gewesen..., der an Stelle des frei schöpferischen Kunstwollens einen wesentlich mechanisch-materiellen Nachahmungstrieb hätte gesetzt wissen wollen.”<sup>23</sup>

Although *Stilfragen* does not articulate fully the contemporary political implications of *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, Riegl does, however, briefly allude to his own era at the end of the earlier book’s introduction: “Einzelne Völker sind den übrigen gewiss in dem gleichen Maasse vorangeeilt, als allezeit einzelne begabtere Individuen über ihre Nebenmenschen sich erhoben haben. Und von der grossen Masse gilt in der grauen Vergangenheit gewiss dasselbe, was heutzutage: sie äfft lieber nach, als dass

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<sup>19</sup> David Castriota in his introduction to Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*. Trans. Evelyn Kain. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992) xxvii.

<sup>20</sup> Castriota xxvii.

<sup>21</sup> Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik*. (Berlin: Richard Carl Schmidt & Co., 1923) v.

<sup>22</sup> Riegl, *Stilfragen*. “Die Einschränkung der Textiloramentik auf das ihr zukommende Maass an Bedeutung bildet überhaupt einen der leitenden Gesichtspunkte dieses ganzen Buches. Ich muss gestehen, dass es zugleich der Ausgangspunkt für alle meine einschlägigen Untersuchungen gewesen ist, - ein Ausgangspunkt, zu dem ich durch eine nunmehr achtjährige Thätigkeit an der Textilsammlung des K. K. österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie gelangt bin. Ja ich will, selbst auf die Gefahr hin ob dieser Sentimentalität bespöttelt zu werden, bekennen, dass ich mich eines gewissen Bedauerns nicht erwehren konnte, dazu verurtheilt zu sein, gerade derjenigen Kunst, zu der ich infolge der langjährigen Verwaltung einer Textilsammlung in eine Art persönlichen Verhältnisses getreten bin, einen so wesentlichen Theil ihres Nimbus rauben zu müssen” (ix).

<sup>23</sup> Riegl, *Stilfragen* vii.

sie selbst erfindet.”<sup>24</sup> I would argue that this drive to imitate anticipates both the aesthetic situation that will emerge in Riegl’s work on the internationalization of folk art in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie* and the aesthetic production that will occur at the beginning of the twentieth century in Vienna—that crucible in which different visual motifs are first melted together and then abstracted, instead of being applied arbitrarily. This intentionality behind artistic practice is highly suggestive of the power of *Kunstwollen*, which Riegl exemplifies and develops fully in his celebrated book of 1901, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn*.

*Spätromische Kunstindustrie* tackles another tradition that early art historians have either dismissed or, in Riegl’s opinion, have commonly misunderstood, that of late Roman art and its common ornamental motifs. Treating the so-called *Völkerwanderungsperiode*,<sup>25</sup> widely considered to have been a period of cultural *Barbarisierung*, Riegl denies such pejorative claims and argues that contact with the Barbarians did not lead to the decline of classical aesthetics in the late Roman art industry. With *Kunstwollen* as the leading concept of his Roman study, Riegl builds on the groundwork established in *Stilfragen*, noting that in this earlier work he has already proven the advantages of cross-cultural contact for aesthetic transformation: “Also mindestens für das Pflanzenrankornament bestünde hienach in der spätromischen Zeit kein Verfall, sondern ein Fortschritt oder doch wenigstens eine Fortbildung von selbständigem Werte.”<sup>26</sup>

Once again attacking the purely functionalist thought of Semper, Riegl replaces a teleology of industrial technology characteristic of mid-nineteenth-century thought with a teleology of creative impulse (*Kunstwollen*):

Im Gegensatz zu dieser mechanistischen Auffassung vom Wesen des Kunstwerkes habe ich – soviel ich sehe, als Erster – in den ‘Stilfragen’ eine teleologische vertreten, indem ich im Kunstwerke das Resultat eines bestimmten und zweckbewußten Kunstwollens erblickte, das sich im Kampfe mit Gebrauchszweck, Rohstoff und Technik durchsetzt. . . Diese drei letzteren Faktoren. . . bilden gleichsam die Reibungskoeffizienten innerhalb des Gesamtprodukts.<sup>27</sup>

In Riegl’s view, utilitarian form and creative practice go hand in hand and are constantly negotiated, a model that, as we will see, becomes a key occupation of the artistic drive of Viennese modernists, perhaps most significantly those creating under the auspices of the Wiener Werkstätte.

As he will also do in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, Riegl concerns himself here with questions of taste, arguing that these considerations are constantly evolving, not necessarily for the better or for the worse. *Kunstwollen* is pervasive throughout each age and the respective genres it produces. Riegl does, however, suggest

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<sup>24</sup> Riegl, *Stilfragen* x.

<sup>25</sup> Alois Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* (Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1927) 1. There are definite parallels between the late Roman and late Habsburg contexts, and I do not believe that this is purely coincidental. For further consideration, see Margaret Olin’s essay, “Alois Riegl: The Late Roman Empire in the Late Habsburg Empire,” in Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms, eds. *The Habsburg Legacy: National Identity in Historical Perspective* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* 7.

<sup>27</sup> Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* 9. My emphasis.

that *Kunstwollen* more explicitly performs its function in the very idiom he has extensively championed, namely the applied arts:

Die obersten Gesetze sind natürlich für alle vier Gattungen ebenso gemeinsam wie das Kunstwollen, von dem sie diktiert sind; aber nicht in allen Gattungen sind diese Gesetze mit gleich unmittelbarer Deutlichkeit zu erkennen. Am ehesten ist dies in der Architektur der Fall und des weiteren im *Kunstgewerbe*, namentlich soweit dasselbe nicht figürliche Motive verarbeitet: *Architektur und Kunstgewerbe offenbaren die leitenden Gesetze des Kunstwollens oftmals in nahezu mathematischer Reinheit.*<sup>28</sup>

If one understands *Kunstwollen* as expressing the political and cultural character of its time, the preceding passage indicates that architecture and the applied arts are most representative of a culture's aesthetic climate.

Before launching into his exhaustive Roman study, Riegl notes the following:

Es wird niemand bestreiten, daß der Zeitraum, dessen Kunst in diesem Bande ihre Bearbeitung gefunden hat, zu den bedeutsamsten zählt, welche die Weltgeschichte bisher zu verzeichnen gehabt hat. Völker, die ein Jahrtausend und länger die Führung in der allgemeinen Kulturbewegung, der Menschheit innegehabt hatten, schicken sich an, dieselbe aus den Händen zu legen; an ihre Seite drängen sich andere Völker, von denen man wenige Jahrhunderte früher kaum die Namen gekannt hat.<sup>29</sup>

This is not unlike the contemporary situation Riegl will describe in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*. Similar to the late Roman period, Riegl's own Austro-Hungarian context is one that is not only characterized by cultural exchange, but also practices it on an aesthetic level for pragmatic purposes – the very plan that he calls for in the 1894 treatise.

In *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie* Riegl sets out to construct a systematic method for considering the idiom of folk art in a modern, industrialized era.<sup>30</sup> Like the decorative arts, he argues, folk art has not achieved its correct place within the field of Art History, which he loosely defines as the history of international artistic development. In the foreword Riegl poses the question of where folk art (*Volkskunst*) stops and the realm of international art (*internationale Kunst*) begins, arguing that the best way to discuss this problem is in terms of the respective economic structure and history of a given culture. Riegl regards Austria-Hungary as the most relevant contemporary example of this transition from the provincial to the international, and he argues that an analytical look at

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<sup>28</sup> Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* 19. My emphasis.

<sup>29</sup> Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* 21.

<sup>30</sup> For a more detailed discussion of how Riegl theorizes the transformation of folk art into an internationalized mode of expression, see Sabrina K. Rahman, "Industrializing Folk Art: Aesthetic Transformation in Alois Riegl's *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie* (1894)," *Kakanien Revisited: Emergenzen* 4 (March 2007).

folk art production within the crown lands will not only benefit all the peoples of the empire, but ultimately all of mankind as well.<sup>31</sup>

The first chapter, “Hausfleiß und Volkskunst, ihr Wesen und ihr wechselseitiges Verhältnis zu einander,” looks at the production of traditional crafts within the context of the family unit (*Familienverband*), contemplating its transformation into what he calls folk art. Riegl notes that without interaction between foreign clans, familiarity with other art forms does not proliferate: “Damit fällt bei den Verhältnissen, unter denen der primitive Hausfleiß schafft, der erfahrungsmäßig wichtigste Hebel für die Hervorbringung neuer Formen, die Berührung von Fremdem mit Fremdem, hinweg.”<sup>32</sup> Such inter-clan exchange, however, had been more prevalent in peasant circles of the past, and Riegl implies that with the dawn of the modern industrial age these exchanges will not necessarily continue. As families expand in size and inhabit even larger geographical areas, they spread their art forms, which are then associated with their respective territory, thus giving rise to folk art. When one comes upon a collection of traditional art forms that all members of a people have in common, then it is legitimate to consider these forms “folk art” in the narrowest and most essential sense of the word.<sup>33</sup> In this way folk art and *Hausfleiß* become inseparable from each other, and together they pave the way for specific developments in cultural production. Riegl concludes that in the modern factory of the Western world one merely finds the basic remnants of *Hausfleiß*, or household work, while in the East, especially within the borders of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, one still discovers *Hausfleiß* with all its traditional qualities as the dominant economic system among the rural peasant population.<sup>34</sup> Riegl’s further investigation of these Eastern examples will form the basis of his modern conceptualization of folk art.

Riegl argues that with the exposure to different cultural traditions that inter-clan exchange affords, traditional folk art will necessarily be influenced and consequently be transformed into a new idiom, one that negotiates both the *heimisch* sense of tradition and the international spirit of modernism:

[W]ar aber einmal die Abgeschlossenheit der ursprünglichen autonomen Familienverbände auch nur an einem Punkte durchbrochen, Fremdes mit Fremdem in nähere, nachhaltige Berührung gekommen, dann war der Fortbildungsprozeß eingeleitet, der mit Naturnothwendigkeit immer weitere

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<sup>31</sup> Alois Riegl, *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie* (Berlin: Georg Siemens, 1894) 5-6. “Insbesondere in Oesterreich-Ungarn, wo die Verhältnisse zur Erkundung der Volkskunst nach ihren interessantesten Richtungen selbst heute noch in verhältnismäßig günstigem Maße zu Lage liegen, wird man nicht länger zögern dürfen, die Ueberlebsel der in ihrem Wesen, Umfang und ihrer Bedeutung klar erkannten Volkskunst zum Gegenstande eines systematischen Studiums und genauester literarisch-artistischer Fixirung zu machen und damit eine Ehrenschild nicht bloß gegenüber sich selbst d. h. den Völkern der Monarchie, sondern auch gegenüber der Wissenschaft, und somit gegenüber der ganzen Menschheit einzulösen.”

<sup>32</sup> Riegl, *VHH* 11.

<sup>33</sup> Riegl 13. “Wo uns aber eine solche Summe von traditionellen Kunstformen, die sämtlichen Angehörigen eines Volkes ohne Ausnahme gemeinsam sind, entgegentritt, dort werden wir berechtigt sein, von einer **Volkskunst** im engsten und eigentlichsten Sinne des Wortes zu sprechen.”

<sup>34</sup> Riegl 15. “[I]m Osten hingegen und insbesondere innerhalb der Grenzen der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie finden wir stellenweise den Hausfleiß fast genau noch mit allen den geschilderten wirtschaftlichen und künstlerischen Eigenthümlichkeiten als herrschendes wirtschaftliches System unter der bäuerlichen Landbevölkerung, wofür wir ein besonderes lehrreiches und charakteristisches Beispiel im weiteren Verlaufe unserer Untersuchung des Näheren kennen lernen werden.”

Kreise ziehen, immer mehr Volkskünste zerstören oder assimilieren, zu immer höheren Organisationen führen mußte.<sup>35</sup>

Riegl explains that within the borders of the Habsburg Empire, the western sense of renewal has forever lived in closest proximity to eastern perseverance, ultimately leading to the “spectacle” in which two unequal powers wrestle one another. The aggressive power is modern and seems to have all the advantages on its side, whereas the homey, old-fashioned way of doing things finds itself on the defensive, protected and supported by the conservative sense of its peoples.<sup>36</sup> In this confrontation between western modernism and eastern folk art, it seems as though the imperialist power of modernism should win; Riegl, however, presents a striking model of reconciliation, in which modern art preserves various folk elements in an abstracted form, allowing for cultural and aesthetic integration in both directions and thus eliminating all apparent antagonism.

Riegl argues that one finds the best surviving example of *Hausfleiß* and the folk art it produces in the Habsburg-administered territory of Bukovina, where the people are extremely self-sufficient and have not yet been exposed to Western modernity: they make their own fabrics from hemp they have planted themselves, use their own folk motifs, and refuse to sell their works for financial profit. Riegl speculates about what would happen if the Romanian peasant woman sold some of her handmade textiles along with eggs and poultry at the market in Czernowitz; he acknowledges that at first she might be skeptical about doing this, even actively resist it, but that the rise of industrialization throughout the empire would take its course, a development that would presumably go hand-in-hand with the establishment of schools of Arts and Crafts throughout the empire. Soon the public would express its curiosity for the visual culture of the eastern Habsburg territories; this rising interest, Riegl suggests, corresponds to dissatisfaction with contemporary developments in international art.<sup>37</sup>

A national “house industry” (*Hausindustrie*) would develop with the growing appeal of folk art, and the circulation of its manufactured objects would increase among various groups of peoples. This process would allow for greater distribution of goods throughout the empire, so that the folk objects in question would retain their unique aesthetic features yet become familiar to all other inhabitants. In Riegl’s framework people living in Bohemia could use something “Galician” in their homes and vice versa. Such an exchange of folk art materials would foster the development of a multiethnic imperial identity via design objects based in folk art traditions of the crown lands. Seemingly traditional objects would be produced in a modernized manner used to promote economic and cultural exchange across borders that are increasingly being defined by nationalism. This process thus allows folk art to turn into an internationalized mode of expression. According to Riegl, such modern, industrialized methods would successfully transform traditional folk art before its inevitable demise; modern-made products would be close

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<sup>35</sup> Riegl 34.

<sup>36</sup> Riegl 44. “Namentlich in der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie, wo seit jeher westlicher Neuerungssinn und östliche Beharrlichkeit am engsten nebeneinander wohnten, bietet sich uns heutzutage das Schauspiel des Ringens zweier ungleicher Kräfte, von denen die aggressive, moderne, alle äußeren Vortheile auf ihrer Seite hat, während die in der Defensive befindliche heimische, althergebrachte Weise fast ausschließlich durch ein Imponderabile, durch den schlechterdings konservativen Sinn der betreffenden Völkerschaften gestützt und geschützt wird.”

<sup>37</sup> Riegl 57.



relatives of the old-fashioned products of *Hausfleiß*, and while their forms are derived from authentic folk art, these objects will attain greater international status in their abstracted, modern forms that are produced through a more efficient means of manufacture.

The crudely made, colorful objects from places like Slovakia, Croatia and Transylvania will be sought after in more sophisticated markets; modern people of culture are in constant need of the “new,” and international fashion supports their lifestyles in the urban sphere.<sup>38</sup> In the following statement, Riegl decrees the end of folk art in its purest form:

Denn wenn einmal der städtische Geschmack die stilisirten Nelken, Aepfel u. s. w. der Volkskunst überhaupt nicht mehr goutirt, dann wird auch die bäuerliche Hausindustrie sich dem veränderten Geschmack anbequemen, ihre Motive aus der internationalen Kunst holen müssen, und dann ist es mit der Illusion von der Volkskunst in der Hausindustrie schließlich und gründlich zu Ende.<sup>39</sup>

When stylized traditional motifs no longer suit the urban market, the peasant-run house industry will adapt to the change in taste and borrow motifs from international art, a process which will put an end to the illusion of folk art as a house industry. But it will produce a fully international design aesthetic.

In the end Riegl suggests the importance of this process of industrialization for all the peoples of Austria-Hungary; it is the responsibility of Austrians to themselves and to the various peoples of their empire to establish a scientific system of collecting folk art remnants and to publish their findings.<sup>40</sup> His enthusiasm for the uniquely multifaceted character of Austria becomes evident in the following statement:

Aber nicht nur uns selbst gegenüber, sondern der ganzen Menschheit, der Wissenschaft, welche international ist, sind wir Oesterreicher eine endgiltige Erforschung und würdige Bearbeitung unserer heimischen Volkskunst schuldig...[Und] auch in Europa bieten sich diesbezüglich nirgends Verhältnisse von gleich günstiger Beschaffenheit und Zusammensetzung, wie in Oesterreich-Ungarn.<sup>41</sup>

He argues further the special case of Austria by claiming that it is only on Austro-Hungarian soil that one encounters a diversity that successfully comprises all thriving European folk arts,<sup>42</sup> concluding that this project will result in a renewed sense of patriotism among all inhabitants of the empire, and also serve as a model for the rest of the world. Riegl’s argument does display some naïve shortcomings, as it assumes that peasants will readily embrace international art, largely derived from elite cultural production in

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<sup>38</sup> Riegl 69. “Wir modernen Kulturmenschen sind einmal neuerungsbedürftig, und die internationale Mode fordert wieder ihre Rechte.”

<sup>39</sup> Riegl 69.

<sup>40</sup> Riegl 75-76

<sup>41</sup> Riegl 76-77.

<sup>42</sup> Riegl 76-77. “Nur auf österreichisch-ungarischem Boden begegnen wir einer Mannigfaltigkeit, die fast alles, was an Volkskünsten in Europa existirt, in sich schließt.”

urban centers, and that they will accept that their folk art traditions have been entirely transformed – no longer entirely on their own terms. At the same time, however, he does reflect upon late nineteenth-century attempts to promote the Austrian *Vielvölkerstaat* as a capable force in both modernist production and the suppressing of nationalism, and offers a peaceful and aesthetically pleasing vision in the process.

### **Modernizing the Empire: Patronage at the Turn of the Century**

In 1899, five years after the publication of *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, the Ministry of Culture (*Ministerium für Kultus und Unterricht*) created an Arts Council (*Kunstrat*) with the intended purpose of furthering the abstract and pluralistic qualities of modern art in order to unite the many peoples of Austria-Hungary, referring back to Eitelberger's hopeful mission in the mid-nineteenth century and pointing forward towards Austria's promising cultural developments in the years to come. Modern art would serve as the universal language for the multilingual inhabitants of the Habsburg Empire, with its abstracted motifs functioning as an integrative idiom of expression. This resulted in the official patronage of many modern Austrian artists, such as Klimt and other Secessionists, as well as members of the Wiener Werkstätte after 1903. As Carl E. Schorske has indicated, "...while other European governments still shied away from modern art, the ancient Habsburg monarchy actively fostered it."<sup>43</sup> Aestheticized decadence has come to characterize the visual culture of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna; Schorske was perhaps the first to put this development into a more politicized context.<sup>44</sup> He merely hints, however, at the Arts Council (*Kunstrat*) established in 1899.

The Arts Council did not merely arise as a response to the foundation of the Vienna Secession, formed in 1898, but rather it has a longer trajectory that finds its roots in the foundation of the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry and its associated schools, as well as in the ideas expounded by Alois Riegl in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*. For this study I am not so much interested in the canonical arts of painting, sculpture and architecture that were the focus of the Klimt scandal, as I am in the idiom that so fascinated Riegl, namely the decorative arts (*die dekorativen Künste*), which, by the early twentieth century, had come to be known by the less deprecatory term "Arts and Crafts" (*Kunstgewerbe*), and would soon be known as the applied arts (*die angewandten Künste*).

Riegl, who had since left his position at the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry and become a professor of Art History at the University of Vienna in 1897, served as a key figure on several councils established by the Austrian government, perhaps the most distinguished of these being the *Zentralkommission Hofrat*, on which he served as the *Generalkonservator* for memorial art in Vienna.<sup>45</sup> For Riegl, all eras and genres of art were equally valid. The Ministry's program reflects this obliteration of hierarchies as it promised that the various ethnic groups residing in Austria-Hungary could receive equal and aesthetically favorable representation under the auspices of the Habsburg imperial arts program.

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<sup>43</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981) 237.

<sup>44</sup> See his chapter on the "Klimt Affair" in the *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*.

<sup>45</sup> For a closer look at Riegl's relationship to monumental art, see his essay "Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen, seine Entstehung (1903)" in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Vienna: Dr. B. Filser, 1929).

The establishment of both the Imperial and Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry and the Arts Council of 1899 had a great impact on the visual culture of early twentieth-century Austria-Hungary, its forms, production and transmission. The time-honored practice of imperial patronage of the arts was reoriented in this period from commissioning objects for the monarchy to objects meant to reach people on a more inclusive basis, and museum collections stressed the pluralistic attributes of such objects for daily use. As Riegl predicted in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, the Viennese bourgeoisie developed a taste for the exotic, colorful motifs of the easternmost territories of their empire, and elements of traditional folk art found their way into the increasingly fashionable realm of applied arts. In 1903 a group of Secessionists made a break with the pure aestheticism of the high arts and, under the leadership of Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser, formed the Wiener Werkstätte. This enterprise, many of whose members were professors at the central School of Arts and Crafts in Vienna, began to manufacture utilitarian pieces that featured abstracted modern forms and folk motifs, and it employed artists from around the empire. This sort of modern design and its industrialized methods of production contributed to the development of distinctively Austrian multiethnic identity, striving for a cohesive design aesthetic both *heimisch* and international in effect.

#### **“Art and Culture:”<sup>46</sup> Berta Zuckermandl’s Imperial Cause**

At the turn of the century Berta Zuckermandl (1864-1945) devoted herself to the documentation of the scandalous new trends in modern art, most notably those created by the artists of the Vienna Secession. Highly involved both personally and intellectually with the Secessionist cause, Zuckermandl writes the following in her autobiography:

Enthusiastically I followed this [Secessionist] slogan into action. *It was a question of defending a purely Austrian culture, a form of art that would weld together all the characteristics of our multitude of constituent peoples into a new and proud unity.* For to be Austrian did not mean to be German; *Austrian culture was the crystallization of the best of many cultures.*<sup>47</sup>

This argument for the establishment of a culture that is uniquely Austrian (comprised of many pluralistic features and identities) by the visual production of Secessionist artists has, for Zuckermandl, roots that go much deeper than merely getting caught up in the spirit of the times. Her father, the renowned liberal journalist Moritz Szeps, had had a close relationship with Crown Prince Rudolf between 1880 and the Crown Prince’s tragic death in 1889. Zuckermandl notes that her father and Rudolf either wrote or saw each other at least once a week, and her autobiography includes many excerpts from their correspondence and personal interviews summarized in Moritz Szeps’s own personal records. The friendship between Szeps and the Crown Prince largely took shape around the

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<sup>46</sup> See Berta Zuckermandl, *My Life and History*, trans. John Sommerfield (New York: Knopf, 1939) 179. Zuckermandl reveals that upon becoming the art critic for the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, she immediately changed her column’s title from “Art Criticism” to “Art and Culture.” She writes, “Here I wanted to mirror the whole of the great development that was happening in Vienna at this time.”

<sup>47</sup> Zuckermandl, *My Life and History* 178.

issues plaguing contemporary Austria-Hungary, i.e. the rise of various nationalisms, including pan-German elements within the empire.<sup>48</sup>

In 1886, Szeps conducted an interview with the Crown Prince and Georges Clemenceau (later to become the brother-in-law of his daughter Sofie Szeps), during which the three urged for an alliance between Austria and the liberal western democracies and a conscious separation from German interests. Zuckerkandl reports the Crown Prince as having stated the following:

‘Germany has never been able to realize the enormous value and significance of having German, Croatian, Polish, and Hungarian peoples grouped around one throne... Austria is a bloc of different nations and different races under a united rule. At least, that is the basic idea of Austria, and it is an idea of enormous importance to the civilization of the world. Because the present execution of this idea is, to put it diplomatically, not altogether harmonious, it does not mean that the idea itself is wrong.’<sup>49</sup>

Alongside Szeps’s desire for a successful, modern Austrian supranational state, was his keen interest in the arts of which he was a key patron, often recognizing great talent before most of the critics did.<sup>50</sup> One intellectual figure whom he had greatly admired and supported was Albert Ilg (discussed earlier in this chapter), who had explained proudly the virtues of Baroque art over those of the Renaissance, and was immediately attacked by critics on all sides. Zuckerkandl remembers, “Ilg – this typically Austrian figure of a ‘revolutionary Hofrat’ – began to gather round him a little group who called themselves ‘Against the Stream,’ and from this group came one of the leading movements of the whole European artistic world at that time. I, of course, joined this group, and by now Ilg was my tutor.”<sup>51</sup> Zuckerkandl’s connection to Ilg, together with her father’s connection to Crown Prince Rudolf, demonstrates further the special relationship that the directed study, collection, and production of art forged with imperial politics in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. In Zuckerkandl’s autobiography there are many points at which she describes the profound connection between modernist cultural production and the conceptualization of a “greater Austria.” One example particularly emphasizes the important position that aesthetics played in this scheme; Zuckerkandl recounts a conversation that Auguste Rodin had with

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<sup>48</sup> Zuckerkandl, *My Life and History* 25. “Their friendship was not the result of pure chance. They had a common thirst for knowledge. Both had an almost instinctive dislike and distrust of the Prussians. And mutual hatred of all reactionary ideas, accompanied by a fully conscious democratic ideal, drew them together.” As of the 1880s, Szeps, a Jew, had begun to experience both personal and professional difficulties due to the rise of German nationalist forces (he went as far as to name Bismarck the “originator of anti-Semitism,” p. 27); this was largely a result of his close relationship with Prince Rudolf and their joint belief that Austria should by no means become dependent upon Germany. In January 1883, Count Taaffe, who had been pressed by Bismarck, prohibited the distribution of the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* by the tobacconists; in November 1884, Szeps was even sentenced to a month’s imprisonment by Georg Ritter von Schönerer, the founder of the right-wing anti-Semitic, anti-Habsburg, and pro-German party in Austria whose ultimate goal was the incorporation of German-speaking Austria into Germany. Schönerer, who viewed the liberal policies of the Crown Prince and Szeps’s support thereof as dangerous, sued Szeps and his paper for slander, with Szeps serving his prison term in the fall of the following year.

<sup>49</sup> Zuckerkandl, *My Life and History* 133.

<sup>50</sup> One famous instance is his early praise of the composer Richard Wagner.

<sup>51</sup> Zuckerkandl, *My Life and History* 105.

Gustav Klimt, when the French sculptor visited Vienna in 1902 to see an exhibition of sculpture at the Secession: “Rodin leaned over to Klimt and said: ‘I have never before experienced such an atmosphere – your tragic and magnificent Beethoven fresco; your unforgettable, temple-like exhibition; and now this garden, these women, this music... What is the reason for it all?’ ‘Austria,’” Klimt simply replied.<sup>52</sup>

Berta Zuckerkandl herself is perhaps best known for the literary salon she hosted; its regular guests included Gustav Klimt, Gustav Mahler, and Arthur Schnitzler. Although in her autobiography she mentions it only in passing, Zuckerkandl was also a prolific art critic at the time, as is evident in *Zeitkunst: Wien 1901-1907* (1908), a collection of her essays with a highly complimentary introduction by the prominent art critic and journalist Ludwig Hevesi.<sup>53</sup> A number of essays published in this volume deal with the emergence of Austrian “Arts and Crafts,” the connection of this modern movement to folk art traditions, and the implications of the production and exhibition of such objects for the intercultural design aesthetic of a modern Habsburg state.

*Zeitkunst* opens with two essays on the applied arts (*Kunstgewerbe*) that foreground the excitement such objects ignite in their contemporary context. Zuckerkandl begins “Kunstgewerbe I” (November 1901) with a dialogue between two museum-goers; one asks the other if he has seen the current exhibit of objects of art (*Kunstgegenstände*) designed by students at the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts, raving about their individual and innovatively conceived forms.<sup>54</sup> This reference to objects for everyday use that are both unique and modern strongly resonates with what Riegl hopes *Hausindustrie* will help bring about at the end of *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*. Like Riegl less than a decade before her, Zuckerkandl acknowledges the influential role that public appeal plays in the production and transmission of the applied arts:

Die Künstler, durch deren Wirken der moderne Wiener Stil entsteht, müssen heute im Kunstgewerbeverein, morgen vielleicht in der Sezession den Kontakt mit dem Publikum suchen. Den Künstlern, welche dazu berufen wurden, die Wiener Kunstgewerbeschule zu reformieren und dem heimischen Kunstgewerbe, der Industrie frische Impulse zu geben, neue Formungen für sie zu schaffen, diesen ist die ihnen zugewiesene Stätte, welche der Vermittlung ihrer Anregungen nach aussen hin dienen soll, verschlossen.<sup>55</sup>

Zuckerkandl addresses the political intentions of the Austrian imperial government; she writes that although the state-supported schools of Arts and Crafts have made the creation of a modern yet *heimisch* art industry their top priority, the artists associated with these schools, especially those in Vienna, have had to align themselves with the Secessionist aesthetic, thus creating objects informed by both a nineteenth-century sense of industry and the highly aestheticized modernism of the early twentieth century. These newly created

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<sup>52</sup> Zuckerkandl, *My Life and History* 181.

<sup>53</sup> Ludwig Hevesi (1843-1910) was one of the most popular and influential art critics of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. He is not only credited with famously referring to Adolf Loos’s Café Museum *Café Nihilismus*, but also with articulating the Secessionist motto, “Der Zeit ihre Kunst / Der Kunst ihre Freiheit.”

<sup>54</sup> Berta Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst: Wien 1901-1907* (Vienna: Hugo Heller, 1908) 1.

<sup>55</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 1-2.

forms, Zuckerkandl observes, are leading to the development of an *Austrian national style*, a similar phenomenon to what has already happened in England via the strength of the Arts and Crafts movement of William Morris and company. The attempt to articulate the qualities of a cohesive Austrian style had been long in the making, stretching back to the late Baroque; at the time of Maria Theresia and Joseph II, Viennese makers of furniture had been playing with the notion of a new, culturally-specific style, something that would emerge in the post-Napoleonic period as Austrian *Biedermeier*.<sup>56</sup> Zuckerkandl does not necessarily see Vienna modernism as breaking with the “old,” but instead as utilizing its aesthetic inheritance as the basis for a new visual culture, “ein voll aufblühendes, unverkennbar national gebildetes Kunstgewerbe.”<sup>57</sup> This explanation of hers resembles Riegl’s argument that old forms derived from folk art can be united with modern, industrialized methods in order to create a unique style that corresponds specifically to the current cultural moment of Austria-Hungary.

In the latter half of the essay, Zuckerkandl makes several more statements that closely resemble both Riegl’s theory of the transformation of folk art into an industrial, international style and his notion of *Kunstwollen*. As Riegl proposed in *Spättrömische Kunstindustrie* (published in 1901, the same year as “Kunstgewerbe I”), the applied arts would reveal the *Kunstwollen* of a given time and place moreso than a traditionally defined “high” art of painting, for example. Zuckerkandl similarly places emphasis on the increasingly important role of the applied arts for the establishment of an Austrian style: “Eine Ausstellung des Oesterreichischen Gewerbemuseums sollte das klare Spiegelbild aller kunstdekorativen Neuschöpfungen sein; *die Synthese der künstlerischen Kraftanspannung aller führenden Elemente auf dem Gebiete der angewandten Künste!*”<sup>58</sup> Artists and imperial authorities alike have recognized the powerful appeal of “new creations in the decorative arts,” and Zuckerkandl cautions that the fertile ground of the new art industry must not be left to its own direction: “Unsere Kunstindustrie gibt einen für künstlerische Konsequenz empfänglichen, höchst bildungsfähigen Boden. Sie will aber geführt werden, sie darf nicht eigenführend sein.”<sup>59</sup> Zuckerkandl concludes, “Die heimische Industrie könnte für den Wiener Stil, für die österreichische Moderne eine glänzende Interpretin werden.”<sup>60</sup> This statement that the industrialized, applied arts “could be a shining interpreter of the Viennese style and the Austrian modern” to the contemporary public makes clear the potential of the Arts and Crafts movement in the Empire both to shape its urban style and to define what it means to be Austrian. In later essays, Zuckerkandl will draw on more specific examples to justify the synthesis of older aesthetic traditions, new industrial methods and the formation of a modern imperial identity through the applied arts.

Written exactly one year later in November 1902, Zuckerkandl’s “Kunstgewerbe II” addresses issues of folk art and authenticity, the latter concept an issue that Riegl failed to address in his ruminations about the industrial potential of folk art. Using the Winter

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<sup>56</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 3. Zuckerkandl further explains that after the end of Napoleonic rule people yearned for a return to “Wiener Heiterkeit,” and thus “[die Heimkunst] knüpfte... an den gerissenen Faden des österreichischen Rokoko wieder an und schuf, indem sie einige Themen des Empire beibehielt, den Biedermeierstil.”

<sup>57</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 3.

<sup>58</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 4. My emphasis.

<sup>59</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 5.

<sup>60</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 6.

Exhibition of 1902 at the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry as a catalyst for her thinking,<sup>61</sup> Zuckerkandl reflects upon the artistic process, more specifically as it relates to the role of the artist in the context of the growing fields of the applied arts and their manufacture in Austria-Hungary. Discussing the production of art under the auspices of the Museum of Art and Industry, Zuckerkandl asks: “Wie darf die Individualität eines Künstlers erst ausgeschrotet und dann noch gefälscht werden?”<sup>62</sup> With this question, issues of authenticity and individual integrity are immediately raised, with Zuckerkandl commenting explicitly on the Winter Exhibition and its unfortunate display of modern Austrian art:

Eine Gewerbeausstellung müsste die besten Momente der inländischen modernen Kunstproduktion aufs sorgsamste auswählen und nur logische, aus einem einheitlichen Streben herauswachsende Ausgestaltungen des Heimwesens gelten lassen. Statt dessen entwickelt sich hier eine wahre Kopienorgie. Falsche moderne und falsche alte Stilarten erfüllen einträchtig die ihnen zugewiesene Aufgabe der Irreführung.<sup>63</sup>

The failure of the show to exhibit the most unique examples of Austrian production undermines the very objective of the museum, its affiliated governmental programs, and their combined purpose of establishing a modern imperial style.<sup>64</sup> Zuckerkandl is so incensed that she calls the exhibition an orgy of copies; inauthentic styles (both new and old) “harmoniously fulfill their assigned task of misleading [the public].”

Zuckerkandl, however, is not merely concerned with the embarrassing implications of this doomed exhibition for true aficionados of art; the Austrian Museum of Art and

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<sup>61</sup> Zuckerkandl again refers to a Winter Exhibition at the Museum for Art and Industry in “Kunst und Kultur” (December 1906), opening her critique of it with the following statement: “Allerdings gehört die Winterausstellung im Stubenringmuseum nicht in diese Rubrik. Sie hat gar nichts mit Kunst und noch weniger mit Kultur zu tun” (14). As in the previous essay, Zuckerkandl does not intend to criticize the artistic idiom displayed, but rather she attacks the poorly conceived exhibition of in, likening it to a simple “piling up” of objects for daily use. Zuckerkandl even goes as far as to state that the museum’s director, Arthur von Scala, should also be disappointed in this messy presentation; as the one to take over its direction in 1898 and turn it towards a modern, yet still imperial, era, von Scala would be more inclined to treat the program as exemplifying the unique cultural production of Austria-Hungary. Zuckerkandl remarks that industrial art seems to be exhausted, and that a new conceptualization of art will be necessary so that the highly interesting and relevant applied arts may once again shine: “Als vor zwei Jahren die alljährlichen Winterausstellungen des Museums unterbrochen und statt dessen die interessante Vorführung österreichischer Volkskunst eingeschoben wurde, da geschah dies, wie wir glauben, nicht einer Programmidee zufolge, sondern weil die Industriellen einfach nicht mehr wollten” (14-15).

<sup>62</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 9.

<sup>63</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 9.

<sup>64</sup> For Zuckerkandl, the show also negatively affects the high opinion of Austrian art on a more international level: “Der Zufall oder das Glück wollten, dass in Oesterreich zuerst, allen anderen voran, die natürliche, praktische, einfache, unaufdringlich reizvolle Lösung des Heimstiles gefunden wurde. Die Fachliterature des Auslandes beschäftigt sich in eingehendster Weise mit unserer Stilart und findet in ihr die reichste, geschlossenste und praktisch zugänglichste Ausdrucksform” (10). She goes on to express the widespread influence of the Austrian style in the decorative arts, lamenting that the Winter Exhibition has not made use of this opportune moment for Austria to be at the top of the world market. Otto Wagner will also voice the failure of such a Winter Exhibition (although not the same one discussed by Zuckerkandl), referenced at a later point in this chapter.

Industry, which had by 1902 been in existence for nearly forty years, needs, in Zuckerkandl's view, to modify its goals with the changing times. She writes, "Die Gründung des ersten Gewerbemuseums in London und die folgende des Oesterreichischen Museums im Jahre 1860 hatte den Zweck, *eine ganz brach liegende, beinahe versiegte Quelle des Volkswohlstandes in der Kulturpflege wieder fliessend zu machen.*"<sup>65</sup> This enterprise had been well intended, its aim was cultural regeneration for the greater good of the peoples who inhabited the empire. Imperially sponsored programs had allowed for the impressive development of objects for household use, and in the process "the art-industrial drive" (*das kunstindustrielle Treiben*)<sup>66</sup> has taken shape, leading to the marriage of aesthetics and functionality in objects designed for practical use.<sup>67</sup> Zuckerkandl finds these new artistic undertakings to be quite promising:

Dieses Zusammenwirken aller Künste gibt aber jetzt der angewandten Kunst eine Bedeutung, die weit über ihre früheren Grenzen hinausreicht. Sie ist zu einem Kulturfaktor geworden, dessen Daseins- und Wachstumsbedingungen nicht genug behütet und sorgsam gepflegt werden können. So muss auch die Kunststätte der gewerblichen Künste ein höheres Niveau als ehemals einnehmen.<sup>68</sup>

As someone aware of the international discourse of the applied arts, the paramount position that Austria occupies within it, and its significance within the Habsburg Empire, Zuckerkandl urges the establishment of a new governmental agency to oversee this industrial artistic production. The following statement strongly resonates with Riegl's proposal for an international style that will arise from the interethnic contact enabled by the very existence of Austria-Hungary:

Unendliche Anregungen liessen sich durch Vorführung nationaler Heimindustrien finden. *Gerade Oesterreich bietet da ein ergiebiges Feld ursprünglich und verschieden gearteter gewerblicher Rasseformungen.* \* Einzelnen Industrien aber, wie z. B. der Spielwarenzeugung, welche ganz der Routine der ungesunden Ueberfeinerung, der Unnatur verfallen ist, könnte durch eine umfassende Vorführung aller naiv ursprünglichen Kinderfreude, die den slovakischen, den altdeutschen, den russischen und und italienischen Bauernspielzeugen entströmt, ein neuer Impuls gegeben werden... Ein neues System allein kann ihnen [den angewandten Künsten] gerecht werden.<sup>69</sup>  
(footnote reads: \*Der hier ausgesprochene Wunsch hat in den kommenden Jahren schöne Erfüllung gefunden)

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<sup>65</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 10-11. My emphasis. Note the similar preoccupation with cultural transformation for the sake of the people (*Volk*) already discussed in relation to Riegl's *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*.

<sup>66</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 11.

<sup>67</sup> The most important contemporary example of this "art-industrial drive" is the *Wiener Werkstätte*.

<sup>68</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 12.

<sup>69</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 12-13. My emphasis. The production of toys will play a role in a later chapter of this dissertation, namely with regard to the Nibelungen figures designed by Carl Otto Czeschka for the *Wiener Werkstätte*.



In “Die Kunstgewerbeschule” (February 1905), Zuckerkandl turns her attention more towards the actual products of the applied arts scene in Vienna, as opposed to their exhibition. Zuckerkandl considers scenarios rather similar to those discussed by Riegl, largely surrounding his concept of *Hausfleiß*. Although she does not use this exact term, she does discuss household art (*Hauskunst*), a term she applies to objects made for the house (glassware, jewelry boxes, candle holders, etc.).<sup>70</sup> Zuckerkandl continues to call for a return to this household state of cultural production, and the applied arts institutions must in her view negotiate carefully with these local practices. In the spirit of the Secession, the folk art production must remain a “purely artistic matter,” one that the bureaucrats should stay out of: “Damit wäre die Gefahr beseitigt, die eine rein künstlerische in eine rein bürokratisch-administrative Angelegenheit zu verwandeln droht...Die Kunst den Künstlern – und nimmermehr den Beamten.”<sup>71</sup>

“Wo halten wir? Zur Eröffnung der kunstgewerblichen Ausstellung bei Miethke,” a piece Zuckerkandl wrote in February 1905 addresses further issues of aesthetics that had proven to be essential for Riegl’s discussion of contemporary artistic production in Austria-Hungary. The essay presents itself as Zuckerkandl’s ode to the applied arts, and she directly addresses them directly: “Kunstgewerbe, jetzt bist du wurzelfest.”<sup>72</sup> She comments on the successful union of form and function evident in the objects on display at Galerie Miethke, a combination that was at once modern in style and *heimisch* in essence: “Formen aus der Heimkultur werden geschaffen, knapp, scharf, logisch in der Silhouette, griechisch in der Offenbarung ihrer Nacktheit. Die Gesten des Lebens beginnen zur Einheit sich zusammenzuschliessen.”<sup>73</sup> This equation to clean, modern forms with classical Greek elements evokes an image that fuses together the old and the new, and creates something new and unified in the process; this notion bears a striking resemblance to what Riegl lays out as the potential trajectory for modern Austrian art in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, as well as in his appreciation of intercultural aesthetic production in *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*. Zuckerkandl urgently expresses the need for new artistic practices at the beginning of the twentieth century, and acknowledges that Austria has been (and will most likely continue to be) a leading force in such initiatives:

Vorerst zwar nur in zwei Ländern, in England und in Oesterreich. England hat eigentlich den Höhepunkt der Ruskin-Morris-Renaissance überschritten. Oesterreich aber steht im Vollsaff seiner Stilbildung. In der Kunstgewerbeschule wurzelte durch das Zusammenwirken eminent künstlerischer Individualitäten die kunstkulturelle Umwertung. Sie entsprang zu gleichen Teilen ethisch-sozialen und rein bildnerisch-formalen Erkenntnissen. Neuer Inhalt gab neue Methoden.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 27-28. For Zuckerkandl, a primary characteristic of *Hauskunst* is that it has largely been a gendered phenomenon: “[D]ie Frauen, die damals tiefstes Kulturverständnis besaßen, sie konnten nicht anders wohnen, nicht anders ihre Stuben schmücken, nicht anders essen, sich vergnügen, sich kleiden, als wozu das ihnen inhärente Zeitbewusstsein sie künstlerisch zwang.”

<sup>71</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 32-33.

<sup>72</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 35.

<sup>73</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 36.

<sup>74</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 37.

Continuing on, Zuckerkandl points towards the newly-founded Wiener Werkstätte as the artists' group that exemplifies this need for aesthetic and useful value particularly well, naming Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser as Austria's first *Stilbildner*. The title of *Stilbildner* suggests the inauguration of a uniquely Austrian style that creates both a sense of modernist power and the desire to stay true to *heimisch* forms; this is similar to the two powers that, in Riegl's framework, will wrestle one another (western modernity and eastern perseverance). The exhibition at Galerie Miethke demonstrates the tremendous role of the applied arts in aesthetic production, and assigns them further an equal role with the (high) arts and architecture in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century project of the total work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*): "So schliessen allmählich Kunsthandwerk, bildende Kunst und Architektur zum Gesamtkunstwerk sich zusammen."<sup>75</sup> Zuckerkandl's stress on the applied arts is more than reminiscent of Riegl; moreover, in resonating with Riegl's notion that *Kunstwollen* is at its most clear and pervasive throughout the applied arts, the critical writings of Zuckerkandl reaffirm Riegl's theories of folk art and its economic and political potential for the Empire.

Like Riegl, Zuckerkandl is also interested in the question of folk art. This is evident in her 1904 essay "Echte und gefälschte Volkskunst: Ausstellung des Museums für Volkskunde." She begins by asking the following questions: "Wie sollen wir unsere Volkskunst uns erhalten? Wie die zahllosen Hausindustrien, uralter Traditionen ehrwürdiges Walten, hegen und pflegen?"<sup>76</sup> The relationship between folk art and *Hausindustrie* once again appears, although Zuckerkandl expresses a very different perspective from Riegl on their transformation in an industrialized era:

Die Haus- und Heimkunst ländlicher Bevölkerungen darf nicht wie die Industriekunst der Grosstadt der raschen Mode folgen, sie soll nicht durch kosmopolitische Anregungen gefördert, international werden; sie muss mit stolzer Kraft ihre Bodenständigkeit bewahren, die enggezogenen Grenzen ihrer Materialbestände, ihrer ererbten Techniken, ihrer formalen Ideale energisch betonen oder vielmehr naiv festhalten.<sup>77</sup>

For Zuckerkandl, folk art must resist the tendencies of the art produced industrially in the big cities. It must not follow whims of fashion or become international in character. In a culture with the capabilities of modern industrial production at its disposal, the traditional forms and motifs of folk art are likely to be appropriated, reproduced, and passed off as "authentic" without the consumer's ever questioning their status. It is, nevertheless, essential that folk art be widely promoted: "Denn diese Heimkünste, welche Lichtwark<sup>78</sup> die Volkslieder der bildenden Künste nennt, sind die Quellen aller kunstgewerblichen und industriellen Entwicklungen."<sup>79</sup> Unlike Riegl, Zuckerkandl does not propose that the forms and motifs of folk art be "destroyed" or "assimilated" in order to participate in an international design aesthetic:

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<sup>75</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 39.

<sup>76</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 40.

<sup>77</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 40.

<sup>78</sup> Alfred Lichtwark (1852-1914) was a German art historian who had helped establish the field of *Museumspädagogik*.

<sup>79</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 40.

Sie müssen rein und ungetrübt erhalten werden, sie sind das frische Blut, sie sind die wachstumbildende Substanz für die Schönheitswerte des kunstindustriellen Grossbetriebes... Daher ist die liebevolle Erhaltung, das sorgsame Zusammentragen alter Hauskulturen einer der wichtigsten Faktoren für die fördernde Weiterentwicklung unserer lebendigen Produktion.<sup>80</sup>

The art of Austria-Hungary must continue to thrive, and the maintenance of folk art will serve as a key impetus for future cultural production in Austria. Zuckerkandl further notes the special case of Austria-Hungary: “Die Vielartigkeit in Oesterreich sollte als kräftigstes Kunstprinzip erhalten und nicht zur Einartigkeit niedergezwungen werden.”<sup>81</sup> Austria’s pluralistic composition is particularly significant, from the Germans in the *Böhmerwald* over to the peoples of the Carpathians, to the Poles and other Slavic groups inhabiting the easternmost corners of the Habsburg Empire. The schools of Arts and Crafts established in these diverse territories should theoretically promote the lively folk art that only the colorful composition of Austria-Hungary can offer. Zuckerkandl, however, criticizes the initiative in its present incarnation, largely for its failure to maintain folk motifs in its actual products:

Die Fachschulen in diesen Provinzen kümmern sich aber wenig um dergleichen Haustraditionen. Sie importieren fleissig Muster aus der Grosstadt, welche die Modelaune der Grosstadt verlangt. Jetzt sind irische Ornamente beliebt, früher waren es venezianische und französische Motive, die kopiert werden mussten. Dass man ganz eigene Akzente bewahren und weiterbilden könnte, daran denkt niemand... *Das Ideal der modernen Kunst ist es, heimische Art in reiner kräftiger Betonung wirken zu lassen.*<sup>82</sup>

According to Zuckerkandl, who is writing a decade after Riegl published his *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, folk art needs to be protected and not merely transformed into something suitable for modern urban tastes; modern art, on the other hand, should not appropriate the forms of folk art and give it an “edgy” or “urban” character, but rather allow these older provincial forms and motifs speak for themselves. The casual shift from the popularity of Irish to Venetian to French motifs is rather devastating, emphasizing Zuckerkandl’s insistence upon the preservation of authentic folk arts.

Zuckerkandl likens the situation to the destructive imperialist relationships that European colonial powers forge with the peoples they exert their political power and cultural practices over:

Werden nicht auch in ferne Länder, denen die europäische Kolonisationspolitik die ‘Segnungen’ der Zivilisation aufzwingt, vor allem unsere Laster getragen und die, wenn vielleicht auch primitive, aber eigen

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<sup>80</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 40-41.

<sup>81</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 41.

<sup>82</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 42-43.

erlebte Kultur ausgerottet? Aehnlich ergeht's bei der 'Zivilisation' unseren Heimindustrien.<sup>83</sup>

Zuckerkindl perceives this process of "civilization" (which, in Riegl's line of thought, would likely fall under the rubric of "industrialization") as a destructive prospect; the importation of folk motifs into modern art can only result in gross misunderstandings and resentment among the different peoples living in an interethnic, multilingual state. It is, of course, of utmost importance to realize that these art forms come from living peoples and cultures; perhaps nothing reminds us more of this than the fact that, since the nineteenth century, Austria-Hungary had seen a surge in nationalist sentiment, with attempts made throughout the empire to establish national, as opposed to supranational or imperial, identities via language, literature and art. In an effort to problematize the cultural appropriation that the *Kunstgewerbeschulen*, consciously or not, have promoted, Zuckerkindl advises her readers to visit the *Volksmuseum*, as it is tied to the vibrant present with a thousand threads. Pure folk art is only the antidote to the poisonous system of stylistic copying that is ravaging modern Austrian culture.<sup>84</sup>

As the end of the first decade of the twentieth century approaches, Zuckerkindl becomes less and less optimistic about the politicized function of the applied arts for the Habsburg Empire. In her essay "Von den definitiven Provisorien" (January 1907), the art critic discusses how bureaucracy has negatively affected the production of applied arts in Vienna. The state-run arts programs (i.e. the Arts Council of 1899 and the *Zentralkommission* of 1905) have turned their focus away from meaningful artistic production, and their disregard for the artistic process has led to a number of problems for professors of art in Vienna, as some of the more prominent, including Carl Otto Czeschka, have had no other options but to leave the imperial capital in search of work elsewhere.<sup>85</sup> Zuckerkindl concludes:

Bureaukratismus und Kunst müssen ewig sich feindlich gegenüberstehen;  
denn das Wesen der Kunst ist die Freiheit. Solange aber  
Verwaltungsbeamte, Ressortchefs, Referenten und Kontrolloren die  
Diktatoren der Kunstentwicklung sind, solange wird das eherne Wort,

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<sup>83</sup> Zuckerkindl, *Zeitkunst* 44.

<sup>84</sup> Zuckerkindl, *Zeitkunst* 46. "Geht ins Volksmuseum. Es ist mit tausend Fäden verknüpft mit der lebendigen Gegenwart...Für das Gift des Stilkopiensystems, sei es nach alten, sei es nach modernen Mustern, das unsere Kultur verwüstet, gibt es nur das Gegengift echter volklicher Heimkunst. Man bewahre ihre Einfalt." Zuckerkindl also supports the "national" art movements taking place throughout the empire, albeit those taking place under the auspices of the *Kunstgewerbeschulen*, those that negotiate both a national and the more universal, supranational identity favored by the program's "modern" imperial sponsors. Her essay "Jung-Polen" (1906) addresses the flowering of national arts taking place in Austria-Hungary at the turn of the century. Zuckerkindl is greatly impressed by the determination of Polish culture, especially after having been stripped of its identity by Austrian, Russian and German imperial forces for so long. At the end of the essay, after having discussed Polish aesthetic production under the auspices of the *Sztuka* (Polish modern artist's association, which, interestingly enough, has a German etymology: *Stück*), Zuckerkindl declares: "Krakau ist ein Kulturzentrum – und Polen hat seine Freiheit – denn es hat seine Kunst!!" (146) This association between art and freedom strongly resonates again with the motto of the Vienna Secession ("Die Zeit ihrer Kunst / Der Kunst ihrer Freiheit"), almost seeming to be a more politicized version of such.

<sup>85</sup> Czeschka, who will be further discussed at a later point in this dissertation, was left no choice but to accept a position in Hamburg; Zuckerkindl cites this case in "Von den definitiven Provisorien."

welches der deutsche Kaiser einst sprach: 'Es muss auf die Kunst der Daumen gehalten werden,' das Richtwort bleiben für diese Diener des Staates und Antagonisten echter Kunst.<sup>86</sup>

In her view it is evident that the imperial promotion of the applied arts has not worked out as intended, and just as nationalism is on the rise, so those involved in the arts are also revolting against the politics of Austria-Hungary.

### The Secession Speaks

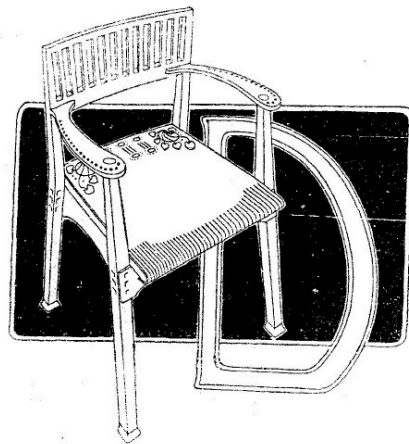
While Zuckerkandl was championing their cause to the greater public audience, modern artists themselves commented on the state of Austrian art and its production on the pages of *Ver Sacrum*. Volume III (1900) in particular presents the views of these designers on the primary issues surrounding the applied arts, their execution and theoretical foundations, as well as on the politicized function of visual culture in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.

This volume features an essay by the premiere Viennese architect at the time, Otto Wagner,<sup>87</sup> "Die Kunst im Gewerbe." Sections of this piece resonate strongly with the theoretical considerations expounded by Riegl in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, as well as the critical ideas that Zuckerkandl would present in the coming years. The rubrication, designed by Wagner himself, is particularly of interest for the discussion at hand: a chair with apparent "folk" motifs on its cushion also features the clean lines of the modernist aesthetic, and both design elements are used to embellish the initial "D" itself.

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<sup>86</sup> Zuckerkandl, *Zeitkunst* 181.

<sup>87</sup> Otto Wagner (1841-1918) was the leading architect and theorist of *Jugendstil* in Vienna and proved to be a major influence upon and supporter of the Secessionist movement.



## IE KUNST IM GEWERBE.

Initiale v. Otto  
Wagner. OM

☉ Es ist wahrlich lohnend,  
einmal auf die Bestrebungen  
der Künstler in der allerletz-  
ten Zeit einen Blick zu werfen.  
☉ Was vor zwei Jahren, ja  
vor einem Jahre noch Nie-  
mand für möglich gehalten  
hätte, ist zur Thatsache ge-  
worden. Wie weggefegt sind  
die letzten Reste der traditio-

nellen Gesinnung und T...

Fig. 2

Otto Wagner, "Die Kunst im Gewerbe"  
*Ver Sacrum*, Vol. 3 (1900)

This design not only immediately exemplifies the subject of Wagner's essay, but it also announces a new era in furniture and the applied arts. The simple straightness of the chair is quite a departure from the curved lines of the Biedermeier, and would have been quite striking to a Viennese public used to the popular bentwood chairs manufactured by Thonet in the late nineteenth century. A clean, blank space separates the two main areas of ornamentation on the chair, quite a contrast to the Biedermeier upholstery usually saturated in ornament. Furthermore, the "folk" floral motifs on the cushion are subtly placed at the back, and, paired with the modern stripes at the front, they achieve a unique balance of "old" and "new," a relationship reminiscent of Riegl's proposal for the transformation of folk art in a modern imperial Austria.

Wagner opens his essay by announcing the rebirth of art through the applied arts, remarking the significance of this movement for Austrian culture: "Alles, was mit wahrer Kunst verbunden ist, hat diese Wandlung mitgemacht und fast möchte es uns scheinen, als ob sich diese in unserer Heimat rascher and radicaler vollzogen hätte als anderswo."<sup>88</sup> In fact, the artists participating in this movement are creating the quintessential modern art; their practice does not, however, exclude the difficulty of compromise on both the aesthetic and professional levels. Wagner writes, "Die Anstrengungen, welche allerorts gemacht werden, um das Kunstgewerbe zu heben, sind sicherlich sehr grosse, und doch unterläuft überall der Fehler, dass man zwei Berufe, Künstler und Gewerbetreibende, vereinigen will, die sich absolut nicht vereinen lassen."<sup>89</sup> This negotiation often leads to misunderstandings, and Wagner sees the 1900 Winter Exhibition at the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry as only furthering such confusion, primarily through its superficial

<sup>88</sup> *Ver Sacrum: Organ der Vereinigung bildender Künstler Österreichs*, Vol. 3 (Vienna: Gerlach and Schenk, 1900) 23

<sup>89</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 25.

portrayal of “Kunst als Mode.”<sup>90</sup> The fact that the state has become involved enterprises in such as the *Kunstgewerbeschulen* seems to hinder the artistic quality of the objects produced in these state-sponsored contexts. Wagner argues that in order to unite these two forces, the political and aesthetic, the following plan must be carried out: “Nur durch die Kunst, ihre Pflege und Anerkennung wird es möglich sein, dem Gewerbe den erhaltenden Lebenshauch einzuflößen, um dadurch Wohlstand und Zeugungskraft des Staates zu heben.”<sup>91</sup> Art, therefore, especially in its current focus on “design,” will be the power to raise the status of the Austrian state, and Wagner sees the Museum of Art and Industry as the organ with the most potential to aid in this task.<sup>92</sup>

The art historian Moritz Dreger also contributes an essay to this volume of *Ver Sacrum* in which he addresses the topic of “Ehrlichkeit in der Kunst,” an issue, which, as we have already seen in Zuckerkandl’s writing, is of utmost importance to the *fin-de-siècle* discourse on aesthetics. He opens his piece with the following statement: “Nicht alles, was ehrlich ist, ist darum auch schön; aber sicher kann nichts schön sein, was nicht ehrlich ist.”<sup>93</sup> Dreger had studied with Wickhoff and Riegl at the University of Vienna, and was also involved with the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry.<sup>94</sup> His association with the Vienna School of Art History is evident in his work for *Ver Sacrum*, as he focuses his attention on ornamentation from the classical period to the present. Dreger discusses the “rhythm” of artistic creation over time, one that seems to correspond to the development of an Austrian national style and begs for a comparison to Riegl’s notion of *Kunstwollen*. He explains the transition from the simple aesthetic of the Renaissance to the complexity of the Baroque, up to the present:

Dann löste das Rococo alles in absichtlicher, aber wohlberechneter Unsymmetrie auf. Es kam wieder der Rückschlag des Empire und des Biedermaiers und dann die wankende Neuzeit, die erst seit etwa einem Jahrzehnt ihren eigen Rhythmus durchzieht unsere ganze neue Kunst. Ist es ein Drama, ein gesungenes Lied, ein Gebäude, ein Bild, *eine kunstgewerbliche Schöpfung...Zahllose Erfahrungen auf allen Gebieten des Lebens, zum geringsten nicht auf dem der Wissenschaft und Politik, haben uns zu diesem Empfinden gebracht.*<sup>95</sup>

This craftsman creation is, according to Dreger, most definitely intertwined with scholarship and politics, a statement that connects the theories of Riegl to contemporary political programs, such as the *Kunstrat* or the *Zentralkommission*. Dreger goes on to address the issue of plagiarism, which ties into Zuckerkandl’s discussion of “Echte und

<sup>90</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 24. Compare to Riegl’s conceptions of fashion (champagne metaphor) in *VHH*.

<sup>91</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 30.

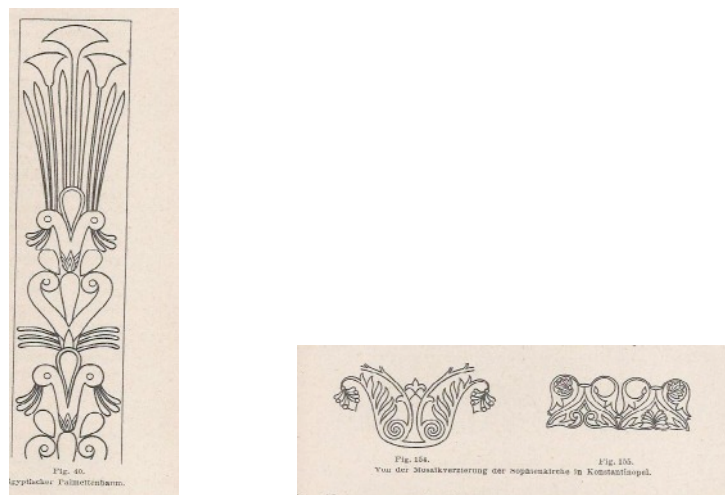
<sup>92</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 30. “Das k.k. Museum für Kunst und Industrie mit seiner zugehörigen Schule, richtig gesagt, das K. K. INSTITUT FÜR KUNST IM GEWERBE, dem in Oesterreich diese Aufgabe zufällt, wird, wie wir hoffen, mit Energie und Opfern das ziemlich weite Ziel in Bälde zu erreichen suchen, das Unhaltbare ausmerzen und stets all das mit offenem Auge acquiriren und herstellen, was nothing ist, um ihm für immerwährende Zeit die Führerrolle zu sichern.”

<sup>93</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 71.

<sup>94</sup> Moritz Dreger (1868-1939) held a number of museum positions in Vienna, eventually becoming a professor at the University of Vienna and later at the Wiener Technische Hochschule. His publications are extensive and varied, including books on Dürer and Fischer von Erlach; the history of lacework, weaving and knitting; and a monograph on the Karlskirche in Vienna.

<sup>95</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 74.

gefälschte Volkskunst,” noting that over the course of history, artists of a given cultural moment will naturally be inclined towards the forms, “in denen sich das Streben des Künstlers und der Zeit am naturgemässesten ausdrückt.”<sup>96</sup> The ornamental motifs that accompany Dreger’s essay are essentially modern versions of those presented by Riegl in *Stilfragen*, further illustrating the correlation between ornamental design and historical moment. In Figures 3-5, note that the basic form used to create the ornament is the same in Riegl’s Egyptian and Byzantine examples of wall decoration (fresco and mosaic, respectively) as that used in the Secessionist examples. One striking difference in the Secessionist motifs, however, is their intended use in the design of book covers, a purpose that stresses a wider distribution of ornament and its potential to infiltrate a number of settings, both public and private.

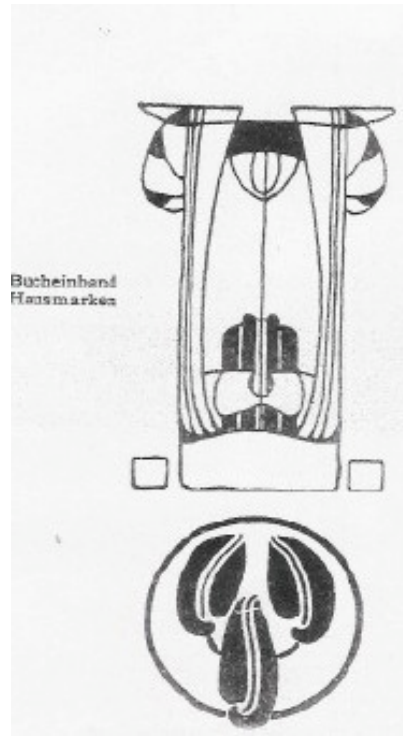


**Fig. 3 and 4**  
**Examples of Egyptian and Byzantine ornamental motifs taken from Alois Riegl,**  
*Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (1893)

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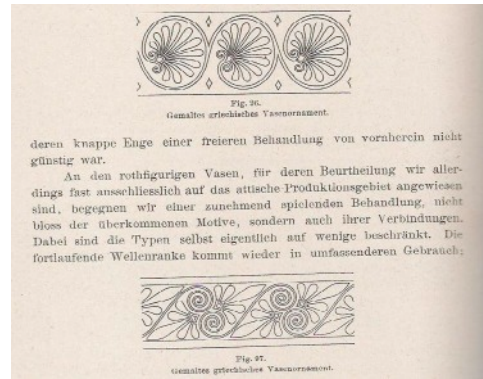
<sup>96</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 75.



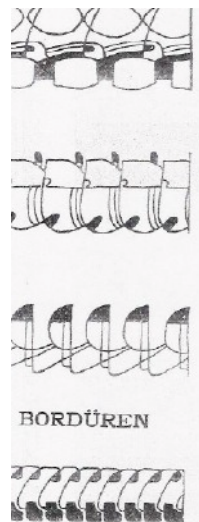


**Fig. 5**  
**Secessionist motifs taken from Max Dreger, “Die Ehrlichkeit in der Kunst”**  
***Ver Sacrum*, Vol. 3 (1900)**

Riegl’s examples of border motifs apply primarily to vase decoration in ancient Greece, whereas the Secessionist borders are for bookbindings. A slight but significant formal difference between the two sets of images is that Riegl’s illustrations remain distinctly organic (viz. the acanthus), whereas the illustrations in *Ver Sacrum* already feature the abstracted quality of the modernist aesthetic. It is worth noting here that such ornamental borders will play an important role in the production of objects for the Wiener Werkstätte, from vase and plate ornaments to wallpapers and textiles.



**Fig. 6 and 7**  
**Examples of Greek ornamental border motifs taken from Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (1893)**



**Fig. 8**  
**Secessionist border motifs taken from Max Dreger, “Die Ehrlichkeit in der Kunst” *Ver Sacrum*, Vol. 3 (1900)**

Dreger continues that it is perfectly acceptable for artists to adapt the same motifs in their own work, as long as that work is representative of the moment in which the artist is creating, and thus contributes to the formation of a cohesive design aesthetic. Dreger concludes by posing the following question: “Aber warum sind unsere Handwerker und viele Halbkünstler unehrlich, warum machen sie etwas, was ihrem Empfinden so wenig entspricht? *Der Besteller verlangt es.*”<sup>97</sup> Dreger’s final statement, “Grässlich ist der Jargon gewisser Stadtkinder, der Gaunersprache riesig verwandt,”<sup>98</sup> is presumably his reaction to the state-sponsored promotion of the applied arts in the citified, imperial capital of Vienna. For Dreger, this kind of patronage does not provide the necessary conditions for true

<sup>97</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 78.

<sup>98</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 78.

artistic creation, namely because the *Besteller* (read “the state”) fails to understand pure aesthetic function. Dreger’s reference to language is also notable, as he stresses that “urban jargon” (presumably that of the Viennese or the state authorities residing there) is closely related to the language of crooks (*Gauner*). Considered in the context of the discourse surrounding the status of folk art in the late nineteenth century (as exemplified by the work of Riegl and Zuckerkandl), Dreger’s statement can be understood as a reference to the apparent antagonism between urban, imperial tastes and the strong local traditions of the outlying provincial territories of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>99</sup>

The 1900 volume of *Ver Sacrum* concludes with Alfred Roller’s take on the Eighth Exhibition of the Vienna Secession, in which he places contemporary developments in the applied arts at the forefront of modern Austrian culture. The invigorating centerpiece of this exhibition is in fact the space itself, designed by the future co-founder of the Wiener Werkstätte, Josef Hoffmann. Roller notes that the modernist aesthetic promulgated by the Secession has already become a bit boring. For Roller, however, the fact that the Secessionist style, as well as modernism in general, has become more pedestrian does not make it obsolete; its new mainstream position can even be used to its advantage:

Für unser Wien hat die Ausstellung noch eine besondere, geradezu epochale Bedeutung: die ‘Secession’ kommt den Leuten nicht mehr ‘secessionistisch’ vor, das heisst, die Moderne hat in Wien aufgehört Mode zu sein, der gelangweilte Pöbel der verschiedenen Gesellschaftsschichten hat andere Spielzeuge gefunden. Die ‘Secession’ ist in Wien keine Hetz mehr – umso besser für ihren Ernst.<sup>100</sup>

“The Secession doesn’t seem ‘Secessionist’ to people any more, which means that the Modern has ceased to be the rage. [...] The ‘Secession’ isn’t fun any more in Vienna—which is all the best for its seriousness.” In reporting these apparently overheard remarks of the “bored hoi polloi” in the imperial capital, Roller manages in one statement both to lampoon his fellow Viennese for fickle aesthetic sensibilities and to draw attention to the deep seriousness of the Secessionists’ mission. This new era of the Viennese modernism that acknowledged the applied arts as the favored medium, gives rise to serious discussions of the role of modern art in a multiethnic Habsburg state. Since the Secessionist style is no longer synonymous with notions of a “radical” avant-garde, or even with fickle conceptions of “fashion,” imperial authorities participating in the *Kunstrat*, for example, can utilize this modern style for serious political purposes, namely in an attempt to forge non-verbal communication with the average Austrian.

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<sup>99</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 74. Dreger goes as far as to use the term “Ringens” in the essay, a move that calls for a comparison to Riegl’s *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*; “Jeden hochcultivierten Modernen wird dieses Gefühl des Ringens und Strebens mit seinen plötzlichen Umschlägen und Hindernissen durchziehen”(74).

<sup>100</sup> *Ver Sacrum* 345.

## Josef Hoffmann and the Foundations of the Wiener Werkstätte

Josef Hoffmann (1870-1956), the co-founder of the Wiener Werkstätte (est. 1903), also concerned himself with the significance of folk art for modern art. In a short essay written for *Der Architekt: Wiener Monatshefte für Bauwesen und Decorative Kunst* (Vol. 3, 1897), Hoffmann considers “Architektonisches von der Insel Capri: Ein Beitrag für malerische Architekturempfindungen.” Treating a cultural context different from his own, Hoffmann comes to see a lack within his own culture. He has become greatly impressed with Capri: “Dort stimmt der malerisch bewegte Bagedanke in seiner glatten Einfachheit, frei von künstlicher Überhäufung mit schlechten Decorationen, noch herzerfrischend in die glühende Landschaft und spricht für jedermann eine offene, verständige Sprache.”<sup>101</sup> This universally intelligible visual language is, as Hoffmann interprets it, based inherently in the folk art of the region: “Das Beispiel von Volkskunst...ist auf jedes unbefangene Gemüth von großer Wirkung und lässt uns immer mehr fühlen, wie sehr wir bei uns zu Hause daran Mangel leiden.”<sup>102</sup> Hoffmann hopes that the power of folk art can also be used in the Austro-Hungarian context, and argues for “den Zweck...in uns einen anheimelnden Wohngedanken zu wecken.”<sup>103</sup> This goal seems to be fundamental to the Hoffmann-led enterprise that will soon become the Wiener Werkstätte. He is, however, adamant that a uniquely Austrian style should develop on its own terms, as opposed to merely importing to Austria the culturally specific forms that have succeeded so well in Capri, or in England for that matter. Hoffmann writes the following:

England geht uns hierin weit voran, doch sollte sein zumeist an mittelalterliche Formen sich anlehnender Geschmack nicht auch für uns der maßgebende sein, sondern wir sollten Englands Interesse für Kunstgewerbe und also Kunst im allgemeinen erkennen und auch bei uns wachzurufen suchen, aber unsere Kunstformen immer und immer wieder in unserem eigenen Wesen zu suchen trachten und endlich die hindernden Schranken veralteter Stilduselei kräftig von uns stoßen.<sup>104</sup>

Hoffmann’s call for the development of a distinctively Austrian style foregrounds the project that the Wiener Werkstätte will pursue in advancing of the applied arts and their function within a modern Austrian state.

Some scholars have remarked additionally that in Hoffmann’s own work, he often captures aesthetic elements and forms associated with the folk arts, especially those rooted in his native Moravia. Born in Pirnitz (present-day Brtnice in the Czech Republic) and educated first in Brno and then in Vienna, Hoffmann’s upbringing outside of the imperial center and early exposure to folk art in the provinces was to have a profound effect on his creative process in years to come.<sup>105</sup> Intentionally or not, Hoffmann’s style evolved to

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<sup>101</sup> Josef Hoffmann, “Architektonisches von der Insel Capri: Ein Beitrag für malerische Architekturempfindungen” in *Der Architekt: Wiener Monatshefte für Bauwesen und Decorative Kunst* (III, 1897) 13.

<sup>102</sup> My emphasis. Hoffmann 13.

<sup>103</sup> My emphasis. Hoffmann 13.

<sup>104</sup> Hoffmann 13.

<sup>105</sup> Franco Borsi and Alessandra Perizzi, *Josef Hoffmann, tempe e geometrica* (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1982) 15. “Le chiavi critiche o di scienza estetica con le quali si può interpretare il suo sforzo produttivo

demonstrate its reliance on the folk forms of his youth. While this practice may seem at odds with the notion of *avant-garde*, it ultimately enhances the social power of modern art in Vienna. The positioning of his style “between east and west” further serves to embody the imperial centrality of the Habsburg monarchy and its peoples.<sup>106</sup>

By 1903, several key artists had left the Secession, frustrated that the group’s main focus on the high arts was betraying the contemporary relevance of applied arts production. Josef Hoffmann, influenced by the utopian English printer William Morris and the Scottish craftsman Charles Rennie Mackintosh, teamed up with the designer Koloman Moser and together they established the Wiener Werkstätte in 1905. Although the art nouveau flourishes of the Secessionist aesthetic are evident in the products of this new collective, from textile designs and furniture to household appliances and children’s toys, the Wiener Werkstätte philosophy was decidedly anti-Secessionist in its insistence upon the practicality of everyday craftsmanship. Hoffmann and Moser did not believe that the artist should create “pure” art only as a means of his own expression, and they argued instead for a notion that art should consist of beautiful objects of high quality that everyone can enjoy on a daily basis. In their group manifesto, the Wiener Werkstätte proclaim a line of a thought that resonates strongly with the aesthetic transformation that Riegl had proposed in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*. The designers explain that utilitarian objects of art should involve a synthesis of new styles with older craft traditions – this would lead not only to an aesthetic enhancement of the consumer’s life, but it would also provide a connection between the present and a splendid past of artistic creation.

Although the Wiener Werkstätte sought to establish a program that would lead to greater public access to and enjoyment of the arts, Hoffmann and Moser were never under the illusion that all sectors of society would be able to afford their finely crafted objects – despite the fact that they fancied themselves thrifty in their replacement of gems with semi-precious stones. This object-based enterprise, was, however a step in a more realistic direction, and the manifesto ends with the following statement: “Wir stehen mit beiden Füßen in der Wirklichkeit und bedürfen der Aufgaben.”<sup>107</sup> The group would succeed in catching the eye of imperial authorities both through the projects it produced for Vienna’s most prominent bourgeois families and because many of its members were instructors at the central School of Arts and Crafts. Franz Joseph’s Diamond Jubilee in 1908 provided the perfect opportunity for these artists to promote their work and test their ideals within the larger cultural framework of the Empire.

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nell’ambito della Wiener Werkstätte è assimilabile sotto forma di sociologia del gusto come sotto forma psicanalitica e filtra la posizione anti-avanguardista o extra-avanguardista di Hoffmann con le radici folk, l’identità morava, l’ipotesi di una marca confinaria tra oriente e occidente, la ricerca di un referente perduto come la centralità dell’impero o il génie du peuple austriaco.” My emphasis. It is worth noting here that the vast majority of non-Austrian scholarship on the Wiener Werkstätte took place in Italian circles between the late 1960s and mid-1980s.

<sup>106</sup> Borsi and Perizzi argue further that in 1908 (the year of the Imperial Jubilee discussed in chapter 2), Hoffmann’s style changes and shifts away from an “imperial” style and towards one that is seemingly more “national”: “Questo avvicinarsi alle radici etniche e di costume soprattutto della Moravia, attraverso queste nuove conoscenze, o forse semplicemente il peso maggiore che acquistano in questi anni nella produzione hoffmanniana, si legge in qualche modo nelle tappezzerie a grandi fiori che ricoprono non sempre con leggerezza gli interni di queste case; le linee dei mobili si lasciano afferrare da una ‘magia’ che riporta più alle favole cecoslovacche che non ad uno stile impero grossolanamente reelaborato” (15).

<sup>107</sup> Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser, *Das Arbeitsprogramm der Wiener Werkstätte* (Vienna, 1905).

## CHAPTER 2

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### **Vienna 1908: Imperial Design and Franz Joseph's Diamond Jubilee**

The Austrian applied arts program found its most public expression in a series of events that celebrated Franz Joseph's Diamond Jubilee in 1908 – a commemoration quite different from Hans Makart's Historicist spectacle for the Emperor's Golden Jubilee a decade earlier. By 1908, the trademarked patterns of innovative artists' collectives such as the Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte had taken over the mainstream consciousness, and modern design had proved to be a viable marketing device for this expression of popular imperialism. Following the opening of the *Kunstschau Wien* on June 1, a number of special events decorated the year, including an exhibition of modern painting at the Künstlerhaus, a special visit by the German Emperor Wilhelm II to Schönbrunn, and an extravagant night of illumination on December 1. The centerpiece of these events, however, proved to be the triumphal parade (*Kaiserhuldigungsfestzug*) that took place around the Ringstraße on June 12, 1908. In this spectacular gesture, the opposition between Alois Riegl's welcoming stance on the end of pure folk art and Berta Zuckermandl's support of its revitalization stepped out of the world of academic institutions and art galleries and onto the very public stage of the Viennese Ringstraße. Examples of modern design related to the *Kunstschau* and in the orchestration of the parade demonstrate that the central institutions in Vienna conceived of the "art and industry" program in a way that was somewhat different from design practices in the crown lands. Despite these discrepancies, the 1908 Jubilee proved itself to be an overwhelmingly positive aesthetic experiment that captivated Viennese aesthetic sensibilities and succeeded ultimately in saturating the public sphere with imperial design.

## Kunstschau Wien 1908

“[The *Kunstschau* is a] gathering of the forces of Austrian artistic aspirations, a faithful account of the current state of culture in our Empire.”

– Gustav Klimt, June 1, 1908 in his inaugural address for the *Kunstschau Wien*

The *Kunstschau Wien* served as the five-month long aesthetic framing device for Emperor Franz Joseph’s Diamond Jubilee, setting the stage for other celebrations of modern imperial culture by displaying the products of the most talented faculty and student artists at the School of Arts and Crafts. From the pluralistic perspective of Gustav Klimt, the exhibition promised to unite modern art and political ambitions by showcasing the tangible aesthetic progress made possible by the imperial applied arts scheme. Instead of merely commemorating the grandiose Historicist achievements under Franz Joseph’s reign, the *Kunstschau* considered the vibrant Austrian present and looked toward its future with an emphasis on new Viennese art, exemplified most profoundly by the Wiener Werkstätte, with their consumerist mission of bringing the applied arts to the greater public. As Klimt stressed in his opening speech for the exhibition, the diverse aesthetic forces of Austria gathered together for an extraordinary and fully authentic show in the name of the Empire.

Planning for the *Kunstschau* began in November 1907, with several prominent Viennese members of the Secession, Hagenbund and Wiener Werkstätte enthusiastically forming the committee. In a letter dated March 10, 1908, in which he requests financial support from the archduchy of Lower Austria, Gustav Klimt describes the unusual direction of the exhibition:

Die neue Wiener Kunstschau von 1908 wird bloß zum kleineren Teil Gemälde und Plastiken, zum weitaus größeren Teil jedoch Architektur und alle jene Objekte bringen, die man mit dem Namen ‘Kunstgewerbe, gewerbliche Kunst, Kunsthandwerk’ u. dgl. zusammenzufassen pflegt. Denn es ist der leitende Gedanke dieser Veranstaltung, zu zeigen, dass die ernste, wirklich moderne Kunst sich bereits auf allen Gebieten des öffentlichen und privaten Lebens durchgesetzt hat.<sup>1</sup>

Klimt emphasizes that the leading idea behind the event is to demonstrate how serious modern art has already infiltrated both public and private life; although modern art includes the conventional formats of painting and sculpture, much more important are those innovative pieces that fall under the rubrics of “Arts and Crafts,” “industrial art” or “artistic craft” – objects at once useful and of aesthetic value. As the applied arts program had become well established by 1908, Austrian government agencies and independent members of the nobility alike were more than obliging in financing the exhibition. Through its concentrated yet thorough display of the most recent products of Arts and Crafts enterprise, the *Kunstschau* gave the public a splendid array of objects which they

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<sup>1</sup> My emphasis. Alfred Weidinger, “ ‘...billig wie die Möglichkeit’: Dokumentarisches zur Entstehung der Kunstschau” in Agnes Husslein-Arco and Alfred Weidinger, *Gustav Klimt und die Kunstschau 1908* (Munich: Prestel, 2008) 14.

could imagine practically in their own homes while they were at the same time accessing the dynamic quality of Austrian imperial rule. Upon receiving a funding request from Klimt, quite similar to the one above, the Ministry of the Interior granted substantial funds to the artists' cause and made a lot belonging to the Vienna Expansion Fund available to the committee through September 1908 on the condition that the *Kunstschau* be recognized as the official exhibition of Austrian art in the Jubilee year.<sup>2</sup>

Between June and October 1908, 179 artists exhibited their work in a temporary space on Schwarzenbergplatz designed by Josef Hoffmann, where they filled fifty-four rooms with exemplary pieces of painting, sculpture and applied arts.<sup>3</sup> The focal point of the exhibition proved to be the Wiener Werkstätte room (Room #50), which, through its display of new objects by prominent designers, including Josef Hoffmann, Koloman Moser, Carl Otto Czeschka and Michael Powolny, demonstrated the ability of the applied arts to fully encompass the innovative Viennese combination of style and function. In the final years of Habsburg rule in Austria-Hungary, the Wiener Werkstätte endeavored to serve as a unifying force for such new artistic concepts and for products of interethnic relations; the multiplicity of forms encompassed in the field of "applied arts" corresponded well to the plurality of cultures in the Empire. Klimt, an artist rather than a politician, also explains the purpose of the exhibition from an aesthetic point of view, thus complicating the conventional association between art and imperial politics. A more conventional scheme would have involved an artist executing imperial commissions. The fact that the Wiener Werkstätte and Secessionist artists did not work under the close supervision of Habsburg authorities, as had great artists in earlier eras (e.g., Albrecht Dürer and Albrecht Altdorfer in the age of Emperor Maximilian I), highlights the new, more democratic direction taken by Franz Joseph's administration.

Thunderous applause interrupted Gustav Klimt's opening address, in which he described the ability of modern art to influence the cultural landscape across existing social boundaries and on a more egalitarian level:

Wir sind keine Genossenschaft, keine Vereinigung, kein Bund, sondern haben uns in zwangloser Form eigens zum Zweck dieser Ausstellung zusammengefunden, verbunden einzig durch die Ueberzeugung, daß *kein Gebiet menschlichen Lebens zu unbedeutend und gering ist, um künstlerischen Bestrebungen Raum zu bieten*, daß, um mit den Worten Morris zu sprechen, auch das unscheinbarste Ding, wenn es vollkommen ausgeführt wird, die Schönheit dieser Erde vermehren hilft, und daß *einzig in der immer weiter fortschreitenden Durchdringung des ganzen Lebens mit künstlerischen Absichten der Fortschritt der Kultur begründet ist*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "Das k.k. Ministerium des Inneren hat dem Komitee zur Veranstaltung einer Ausstellung österreichischer Kunst im Jubiläumsjahre Obmann Gustav Klimt bereit erklärt, den dem Wiener Stadterweiterungsfonds gehörigen Baugrund in der Lothringerstraße dem bezeichneten Komitee für die Zeit bis 30. September 1908 benützungsweise zur Errichtung einer Ausstellungshalle zu über-lassen." Letter in the Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv Wien, k. k. Ministerium des Inneren, 11 January 1908.

<sup>3</sup> From October 2008 through January 2009, the Austrian National Gallery at the Belvedere recreated sections of the *Kunstschau 1908*, which allowed me to see many of these objects in their original display setting.

<sup>4</sup> "Programmrede Gustav Klimts," *Die Neue Freie Presse*, 2 June 1908. My emphasis.



At this politically tenuous moment in Vienna it was much less important to align oneself with a specific artist's group or manifesto than it was to enable different groups to come together with the greater purpose of creating a cohesive Austrian cultural identity and in Klimt's words "with the artists' purposes of [advancing] the progress of culture." Drifting away from the ethos of the *avant-garde*, the artistic collaboration that took place for the *Kunstschau* 1908 resembles closely the supranational imperial Habsburg plan for the Arts and Crafts; the artists have come together, in an "unconstrained way" (*zwangloser Form*), free of their clique-ish allegiances, and "solely for the purpose of this exhibition." One of the political subtexts that can be inferred from Klimt's speech about the aesthetic principles of the exhibition is that just as the artists are cooperating on this occasion in the greater name of Austria, so the crown lands should transcend their respective national allegiances, while nevertheless maintaining their inherent diversity, in order to contribute to the imperial cause. The government support for the exhibition was surely contributed as much with the latter as with the former objective in mind. This statement of Klimt's, describing how multiple groups of artists combined forces to mount the *Kunstschau*, applies as well to the way in which many of these same individuals cooperated to carry out their work for the Jubilee parade a week and a half later.

For Klimt, the artist, as the prime contributor to the development of a dynamic community, has a greater responsibility to create art for the benefit of society as a whole than to produce it for its own sake; he discusses this notion in the following passage:

Und weit wie den Begriff 'Kunstwerk' fassen wir auch den Begriff 'Künstler.' Nicht nur die Schaffenden, auch die Genießenden heißen uns so, sie, die fähig sind, Geschaffenes fühlend nachzuerleben und zu würdigen. Für uns heißt 'Künstlerschaft' die ideale Gemeinschaft aller Schaffenden und Genießenden. Und daß diese Gemeinschaft wirklich besteht und stark und mächtig ist, ... beweist die Tatsache, daß dieses Haus gebaut werden konnte, daß jetzt diese Ausstellung eröffnet werden kann.<sup>5</sup>

Klimt calls for an experience of art, what he calls "the ideal community of artistry" (*Künstlerschaft*), that involves both those who create and those who take pleasure in what is created; the erasing of the boundaries between artist and user would then create a complete aesthetic for living. Having objects of applied arts on display at the *Kunstschau* thus (at least in theory) allowed viewers to imagine and consider having such pieces at home for their own personal use, thus bringing the modern imperial aesthetic into the private spaces of the bourgeois consumer. These words echo the ideas discussed in chapter 1, namely Riegl's call for a cohesive aesthetic that would unite the individual touches of the burgeoning cottage industries with the pluralistic interests of the Austrian imperial state.

The morning edition of *Die Neue Freie Presse* on June 2, 1908 reported enthusiastically on the opening of the *Kunstschau*. Over two thousand guests had gathered in the main courtyard of Hoffmann's exhibition space; among them were government representatives, including two prominent members of the Ministry for Education who had directed the Arts Council in 1899, Count Wickenburg and *Oberbaurat* Otto Wagner. Their attendance echoes Klimt's insistence that the show display the state of contemporary

<sup>5</sup> "Programmrede Gustav Klimts," *Die Neue Freie Presse*, 2 June 1908. My emphasis.

culture in Austria and stresses the inclusion of political voices in this celebration of modern design practices in the imperial capital.



**Fig. 9**

**Opening of the *Kunstschau 1908* (Gustav Klimt is the bearded man on the right in the image, walking with the man in the top hat)**

*Die Neue Freie Presse* demonstrated in its review of the *Kunstschau* opening that applied arts were without a doubt the most striking aspect of the exhibition:

War es doch diesmal offenbar die Idee der Veranstalter, nicht eine Ausstellung von Kunstwerken zu bieten, sondern vielmehr eine Ausstellung von allen möglichen Dingen, die in künstlerischer Art, von künstlerischen Gesichtspunkten aus hergestellt werden können. Also vor allem Gewerbliches, Gerätes, Gebrauchsgegenstände, ganze Innenräume, Schmuck, Architektonisches, wie Gartenanlagen, Theaterdekorationen und Grabmäler, Bilderbücher für Kinder und decorative Symbolik für Erwachsene, manchmal sogar ‘nur für Erwachsene.’<sup>6</sup>

Items on display include a wide range of utilitarian objects, interior design, jewelry, architectural façades, and theater decorations as well as picture books for children, tombstones, and decorative designs “for adults only.” This list suggest that an entire

<sup>6</sup> A.F.S. , “Die Kunstschau 1908,” *Die Neue Freie Presse*, 2 June 1908.

lifestyle can be fashioned by the Wiener Werkstätte, from the interiors and exteriors of private homes to the social sphere of theatrical entertainment, and that these modernist products can appeal simultaneously to the lively needs of small children and the more somber ones of those burying their dead. The incorporation of such designs into both daily activities and special moments becomes a patriotic deed, uniting the individual subject with the state institutions for applied arts that have made this aesthetic production possible.



**Fig. 10**

**Room for Poster Art at the *Kunstschau 1908***

A room devoted exclusively for poster art (*Plakatkunst*) was also quite remarkable in its expression of modern popular culture. Among the posters are ones created by Wiener Werkstätte artists that advertised the Jubilee parade throughout the streets of Vienna, and will be discussed at a later point in this chapter. Graphic design, in the form of posters, postcards and postage stamps, played an especially powerful role in bringing imperial celebrations to the people on a number of levels, as it was easily reproducible, affordable, and offered people a material way to remember the Jubilee for themselves and share the experience with others of their own choosing.

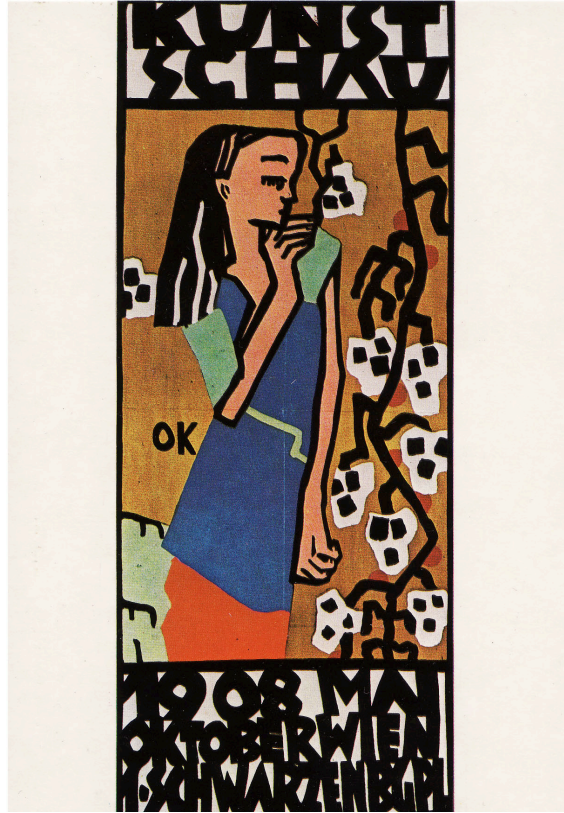


Fig. 11

Oskar Kokoschka, *Girl Picking Cotton (Baumwollpflückerin)*, lithograph (1908)

Oskar Kokoschka's official poster for the *Kunstschau* remains one of the most iconic images of Wiener Werkstätte graphic design.<sup>7</sup> The girl's simply cut, yet deeply colorful frock softens her angular frame, while the scarlet skirt, periwinkle tunic and sage green blouse contrast with the white cotton bolls, boldly bringing her figure and the cotton bush out of the earthtone background and into the forefront of an otherwise flat and two-dimensional lithographic piece. The girl's closed eyes fix her in a dream-like state, her fingers lightly touching one of irregularly shaped clumps of white on the jagged black branches, about to pick the cotton gently off the bush. Thickly outlined in black, her arms and face connect her body to the Secessionist-style block lettering that frames the image, as if she herself is writing the text with the hanging branch. The word *Kunstschau* brings the idyllic scene out of its timeless isolation, with the dates May-October 1908 and the urban location of *Vienna*, more specifically, on *Schwarzenbergplatz* (right off the Ringstraße), indicating a display of the provincial (the cotton bushes of the Balkans) in the imperial metropolis. The use of "Schau" as opposed to the more conventional "Ausstellung" highlights the spectacular nature of the advertised event. *Schau* implies an amalgam of high and low culture; *Völkerschau* and *Schaufenster*, two increasingly popular concepts of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna come to mind. Although the subject of the print harkens back to pastoral images common in nineteenth-century Romantic and Realist painting, the

<sup>7</sup> The angular female subject of this print established the style of Kokoschka's early printed images (see *Die träumenden Knaben*, for example), and would later become a key influence on the Expressionist aesthetic.

highly modern aesthetic of the poster stresses the convergence of the rural and the urban, simple peasant fashion with the flat surfaces, striking colors and clean lines of modernity.

The urban Viennese viewer would probably have been unaware that the girl is picking cotton, and not only because Kokoschka did not print the title on the poster. Indeed, cotton-picking seems a most unusual image with which to market the most significant exhibition of modern art in Vienna since the Secessionists first presented their work a decade earlier. In light of the increasingly abstract and functional aesthetic of the time, the organizers of the *Kunstschau* could have just as easily chosen a purely non-representational design. What makes this image especially peculiar, however, is that it bears no relation to the act it claims to portray. Cotton grows on a bush, not on a vine or a tree, as Kokoschka's image implies (perhaps he took the German word *Baumwolle* a bit too literally?): the poster reveals the artist's apparent unfamiliarity with cotton and conveys a false impression to the urban viewer.

For an exhibition that intended to showcase the present state of culture in the Austrian Empire, it is rather striking that the committee would have chosen a poster depicting an activity that would have seemed most impractical to the modern viewer. The Viennese did not pick cotton recreationally in the way they went apple-picking or mushroom-hunting; not only does the crop not grow in the immediate surroundings of the imperial capital, but cotton-picking suggests hard work and conditions bordering on the slavish. One must bend down for long periods of time to pick cotton off its bush, not stand casually at eye level and lightly pick the bolls as one does berries. At the same time, the image conjures an image of Riegl's peasant woman in Czernowitz, who creates her textiles from hemp she has grown herself and which she then sells at the local market. Cotton is also a crop that one might have associated with "oriental" landscapes within the Empire (such as Bosnia-Herzegovina), those with warmer climates and peasant cultures that had traditional cottage industries. By the early twentieth century, cotton gins began appearing throughout the empire, but most notably in the industrial center of Moravia but also in other territories such as Galicia, Bukowina, Silesia and Bosnia. Initially cotton came to the Habsburg lands from Egypt via the port of Trieste; as the mass production of textiles became more commonplace, cotton became a viable crop in the newly annexed territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>8</sup> The "primitivist" aesthetic, which many artists of the time were practicing (thanks to the influence of French painters like Gauguin), is evident in the flattened surfaces and sharp, jagged angles of the lithograph. The "primitive" subject matter, however, has much more to do with the southern eastern realms of Austria-Hungary than with the art of French Polynesia. Kokoschka's poster thus presents the Viennese modernist imagination of a peasant's activity to the urban sphere and in the most modern of art exhibitions. The image is in dialogue with the rise of industrialism and its effect on folk art around the Empire; it is also evocative of the tensions that Alois Riegl seeks to smooth over and Berta Zuckerandl addresses as a real political issue.

To complement Kokoschka's "folkish" poster, a second image, this one by Berthold Löffler, also advertised the *Kunstschau*; together the two designs represent how both folk-inspired figures and modern abstraction (i.e., the final stages of Riegl's transformative theory of folk art) come together in the marketing of the event. Löffler, who was at the time teaching the young Kokoschka at the School of Arts and Crafts, created a

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<sup>8</sup> See Johann Georg Kohl, *Austria: Vienna, Prague, Hungary, Bohemia and the Danube; Galicia, Styria, Moravia, Bukovina and the Military Frontier* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843) 151-154.

more Secessionist-inspired poster for the exhibition. The professor and his student were also major figures in designing the Ringstraße parade that would take place two weeks after the opening of the exhibition; they both competing in the same competition to design the poster for the event. Löffler's poster is more typical of the glossy Viennese aesthetic of artists in the Secession and Wiener Werkstätte groups. When compared to Kokoschka's almost "primitivist" lithograph, the profile of Löffler's female subject resembles Klimt's "golden women." With her scrolling golden hair forming a decorative banner, blue cape and simply outlined Grecian profile, the stylized woman exhibits the distinctive qualities of modern Viennese graphic design; urban viewers would easily have recognized in this image the Wiener Werkstätte aesthetic they had come to know while walking the streets of the imperial capital.



**Fig. 12**  
**Berthold Löffler, Poster for *the Kunstschau* (1908)**

Löffler and Kokoschka's posters both represent a unique Austrian idiom that combines high modernist style and the industrial technique of lithography with subject matter rooted in folk (national) and classical-historicist (imperial) art. The printing of these posters in 1908 represents a major political gesture produced in the context of the imperial aesthetic program. As suggested earlier, much of the artistic contribution to the Jubilee was produced in reasonable graphic formats for general consumption: commemorative postcards, event programs, stamps, and special booklets were sold at relatively low cost to those wanting to bring the Emperor's celebration into their homes or to use it to embellish their everyday correspondence. Posters, including those by Kokoschka and Löffler, were also available for private purchase, although this format was created primarily for the public sphere, as the posters graced street corners around the city.



## Advertising the Jubilee Parade

The Jubilee year also gave Viennese designers the opportunity to display publicly the ideal of the total work of art that embodied the ultimate creative goal at the turn of the century. Members of the Hagenbund and Wiener Werkstätte, as well as independent artists such as Koloman Moser, who by 1908 was no longer affiliated with the group he had co-founded,<sup>9</sup> produced enthusiastically for the event. However, the majority of artists involved in this massive production were not yet established in their own right, but were instead students at the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts. In addition to the professor-student team of Kokoschka and Löffler, Wiener Werkstätte and Hagenbund artists such as Carl Otto Czeschka, Josef Hoffmann, Joseph Urban and Heinrich Lefler instructed students such as Josef Divéky and Remigius Geyling in graphic production and costume design for the parade. The modern applied arts in Vienna no longer existed solely in galleries or the homes of well-to-do bourgeois families like the Waerndorfers or the Wittgensteins; soon anyone who sent mail was able to participate in the imperial sponsorship of the applied arts by purchasing a postage stamp or a postcard; those who walked the streets of Vienna could see Wiener Werkstätte posters on buildings; and anyone who found a prime viewing spot along the parade's route from the Prater to the Ringstraße was able to see the imperial applied arts in action. Vienna-based artists were not, however, the sole creative force behind this performance event on the Ringstraße – artists in the crown lands were responsible for representing their own respective cultures in the “Parade of Nations.” By creating equally elaborate parade floats and costumes, these artists choreographed multiple decentralized interpretations of the Habsburg Empire to complement those that were designed in Vienna. Their involvement was contingent upon their association with regional applied arts institutions that served a parallel function in the crown lands to those sponsoring jubilee artists in Vienna. The faculty and student artists who worked in the outlying regions of Austria-Hungary, however, tended to design “folkish” objects and textiles, albeit for a Viennese market, instead of employing modern, industrialized techniques. During the day-long parade a notable disparity between the aesthetic products of Vienna and those of the Cisleithanian crown lands arose alongside linguistic misunderstandings, thus revealing that the Habsburg Empire was not being designed as seamlessly as both its artistic and political supporters had hoped.

## The Official Poster Competition

The parade committee decided that a poster would be the best way to first advertise the parade to the urban masses. On March 18 the Viennese press announced an open poster competition with a deadline of April 3.<sup>10</sup> The jury consisted of a committee of “artist-experts” who were involved in the jubilee festivities; this democratic gesture differed

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<sup>9</sup> Moser had left the group in 1905.

<sup>10</sup> *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, Nr. 77, vom 18. März 1908. S. 9. “Für den besten Entwurf ist ein Preis von 2000 K ausgesetzt, der gleichzeitig das Ausführungshonorar bildet. Da in Aussicht genommen ist, verschiedene Arten, auch kleinere Plakate zu verwenden, ist der Ankauf mehrerer geeigneter Entwürfe und ihre Ausführung vorgesehen. Es ist für diesen Zweck ein Betrag von 3000 K ausgesetzt, der ganz zur Verwendung gelangt.”

greatly from previous instances of imperial pageantry, the most recent having been the Historicist Makart Jubilee of 1898. The traditional model of imperial arts patronage was opened up to the general public, and the *Obersthofmeisteramt* of Prince Montenuovo, as the Emperor's closest advisor, placed all control in the hands of the artists involved. Given Franz Joseph's general lack of enthusiasm for public spectacles at this point in his reign, it is unlikely that working closely with modern artists was high on his agenda. Poster entries came from all over Austria and the first prize went to the Wiener Werkstätte member and professor of applied arts Berthold Löffler, whose submission became the official image of the event.

Löffler and his student Oskar Kokoschka were once again designing for the same cause, although this time for the more "mainstream" or popular occasion of the parade. Löffler's winning poster illustrates a more modern bourgeois and "Western European" portrait of a knight, as compared to Kokoschka's submission – a rougher, "Eastern" group image, which evokes the most distant Habsburg lands and ideas of folk art as opposed to the cosmopolitan style produced at the Empire's center.



Fig. 13  
Berthold Löffler, official poster for the *Kaiserhuldigungsfestzug* (1908)



In choosing Löffler's design, the committee decided for an inherently "Viennese" style to promote the year's events. The two-dimensional use of color and the simple portraiture of Löffler's poster were both hallmarks of the Wiener Werkstätte style in the graphic arts. By making a knight the subject of his poster, Löffler was both invoking the fairy-tale world of popular contemporary children's book illustration and assigning to the parade that legendary character.<sup>11</sup> Löffler seems to refer to a member of a historical group in the parade and depict a modernist vision of a knight who represents the grand Habsburg legacy from its medieval beginnings to the present. The knight's scrolling golden hair strongly resembles that of the woman in Löffler's poster for the *Kunstschau* and suggests the parade's "Germanic" character. Furthermore, the red flag with the lion, especially in conjunction with the word *Huldigung*, invokes the military and spiritual missions of Habsburgs, as rulers of the Holy Roman Empire, in the Crusades. These connotations could not have been further from the more secular and democratic concerns of the modern state of Austria-Hungary.

Since Viennese artists were not responsible for the parade's representation of the crown lands, it is not surprising that Löffler's image does not encompass the ethnic diversity of the empire. It does, however, provide a romanticized view of the beauty and historical pageantry that one could hope to see on June 12, 1908. Löffler, as a professor at the School for Arts and Crafts, may well have subscribed to an imperial understanding of the applied arts and carried out its pedagogical program of modernizing historically and geographically distant forms. His official poster for the parade presents an unmistakably noble view of the event. This medieval knight serves the Emperor rather than the modern figure of Franz Joseph, who is enabling new and dynamic cultural production in the name of the Dual Monarchy and its *peoples*. Löffler does not attempt to show Austrian plurality, either across the vast territory of the Habsburg Empire, or within the confines of the imperial capital. His fair-skinned knight is more emblematic of Western European dynastic history and Karl Lueger's vision of Viennese identity than of the actual circumstances of the empire at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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<sup>11</sup> Also in 1908, Gerlach und Wiedling published a series of children's books with illustrations by the Wiener Werkstätte, including Carl Otto Czeschka's *Die Nibelungen*.



**Fig. 14**  
**Oskar Kokoschka, design for poster, tempera on cardboard (1908)**

Kokoschka's design is strikingly different from Löffler's, hinting at the impact of Gauguin's primitivism as well as the rough, angular "woodcut" quality that would become a hallmark of Expressionism. While Löffler favors a blonde man in recognizably European armor, Kokoschka depicts darker figures in vaguely exoticized garb. Although Kokoschka does not indicate whether he is depicting the historical or the multi-national aspect of the parade, the image clearly suggests the latter, representing what seems to be a peasant family. The woman wears a simple short-sleeved blouse in an earth tone, the child is shirtless, and the man is the opposite of Löffler's clean-shaven, elaborately dressed knight with his long beard and simply cut, fur-trimmed blue coat. He leads the way blowing into an instrument resembling a bagpipe, with his eyes closed; the boy and the woman follow, waving their hands as if in a trance-like dance. At first glance, the awkward hand gestures and flat frames suggest broken bodies and a sense of ugliness; Kokoschka, however, presents the viewer with an alternative sense of beauty through the group's exotic and passionate procession. The boy and the woman carry what are presumably folk-oriented props from nature (perhaps bird feathers or sheaths of wheat), while a bird or a bird-shaped banner sweeps down from the left-hand corner into the grouping of figures, suggesting the family's close relationship to nature. The menorah-like candlesticks hint at a fascination

with the perceived mystical (Jewish) cultures of the eastern territories of the empire such as Galicia and the Bukowina.

Straying thematically from Löffler's winning design, Kokoschka's draft takes the spotlight away from Germanic knights and the nobility and turns it instead on peasants marked as Eastern Europeans, whose faces the largely aristocratic Viennese committee may not have wanted to emphasize in marketing the event. Löffler's image, pointing to the legendary character of Austrian dynastic history, was the one that gave those walking the streets of Vienna their first glimpse of the parade. Although by 1908 both Löffler and Kokoschka were members of the Wiener Werkstätte,<sup>12</sup> Löffler's design, at least on a purely visual level, is more in line with the recognizably "Viennese" style of that group. The visitors from the provinces so shocked the Viennese upon their arrival in the imperial capital that figures like Karl Kraus remarked on their foreign "ugliness." It is people like these visitors that Kokoschka pictures in his rejected entry.

### **Postcards for the Jubilee**

Postcards by Wiener Werkstätte artists were especially promising in their ability to disseminate modern images of the Emperor and the supranational modernist aesthetic that imperial authorities were hoping to promote through both the greater parameters of the applied arts program and the grandiose gesture of the Jubilee.<sup>13</sup> Both younger and established artists designed two sets of postcards in preparation for the event: a series of portraits of Franz Joseph and scenes depicting historical reenactments by certain groups of the parade.

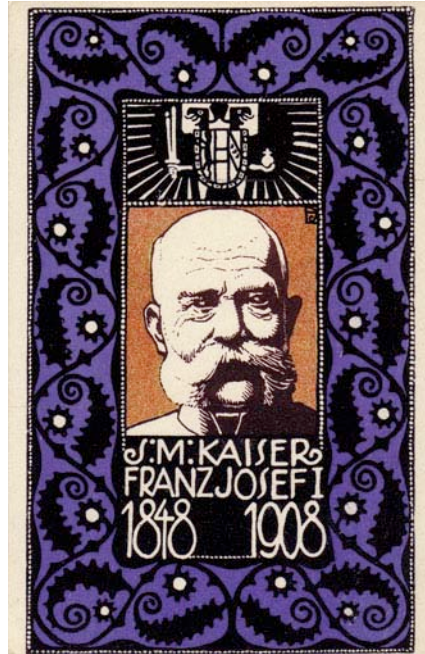
The student artists Josef Divéky, Remigius Geyling, and Hubert von Zwickle were the most prolific in terms of postcard production. Under the instruction of Professor Berthold Löffler, these three belonged to a "second generation" of modern artists who had attended the School of Arts and Crafts in Vienna and trained under the imperial program for the applied arts laid out by people like Ilg and Riegl. Their studies in Vienna at the turn of the century may well have stressed the process of transforming folk art into a modern, universally understood medium of choice for the young artists of Austria-Hungary, many of whom were coming from around the Empire to study in the imperial capital. For the Jubilee celebration on June 12, 1908, their postcards served as a lucrative advertising device that both anticipated and commemorated the celebrations for Franz Joseph in the popular realm. For those imperial residents who were unable to travel to Vienna for the parade, the modernist postcards allowed them to experience the distant spectacle in a vibrant and creative way, perhaps even more intensely than photographic postcards did. The Wiener Werkstätte postcards exhibited the power of modern art to enhance the image of the aging Habsburg Emperor and his anachronistic state. They depicted the state of culture in "Austria" as a collection of updated traditional imperial forms, one that literally juxtaposed elements of conventional images with modern framing. Divéky's postcards of Franz Joseph in particular demonstrate this modern framing. Geyling's cards resemble

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<sup>12</sup> In 1908 the Wiener Werkstätte also published a book written and illustrated by the art student Kokoschka, *Die träumenden Knaben*, marking the young artist's foray into the modern art scene of Vienna.

<sup>13</sup> See Jill Steward's essay "The Potemkin City: Tourist Images of Late Imperial Vienna" in Felix Driver and David Gilbert, eds., *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) for an excellent account of the postcard's investment in Austria in 1869.

Czeschka's *Nibelungen*, Löffler's cards are highly reminiscent of his programs for the Cabaret Fledermaus, and therefore bring out the inherent "theatricality" of the whole event. Viennese artists did not necessarily approach the event as a reconstruction of "real life."



**Fig. 15**  
**Josef Divéky, WW postcard #160 (1908)**

The deep purple of the card indicates royalty or the Empire, while the organic tendril motif of the frame suggests nineteenth-century debates on ornament, including Owen Jones's *The Grammar of Ornament*, Riegl's *Stilfragen* and early Secessionist discussions of design in *Ver Sacrum*. The placement of Franz Joseph's portrait in the center of the card harkens back to other imperial print projects such as Dürer's woodcut portraits of Maximilian I, although the black and white treatment of the Emperor's face seems to draw inspiration from the new photographic medium.



**Fig. 16**  
**Josef Divéky, WW postcard #162 (1908)**

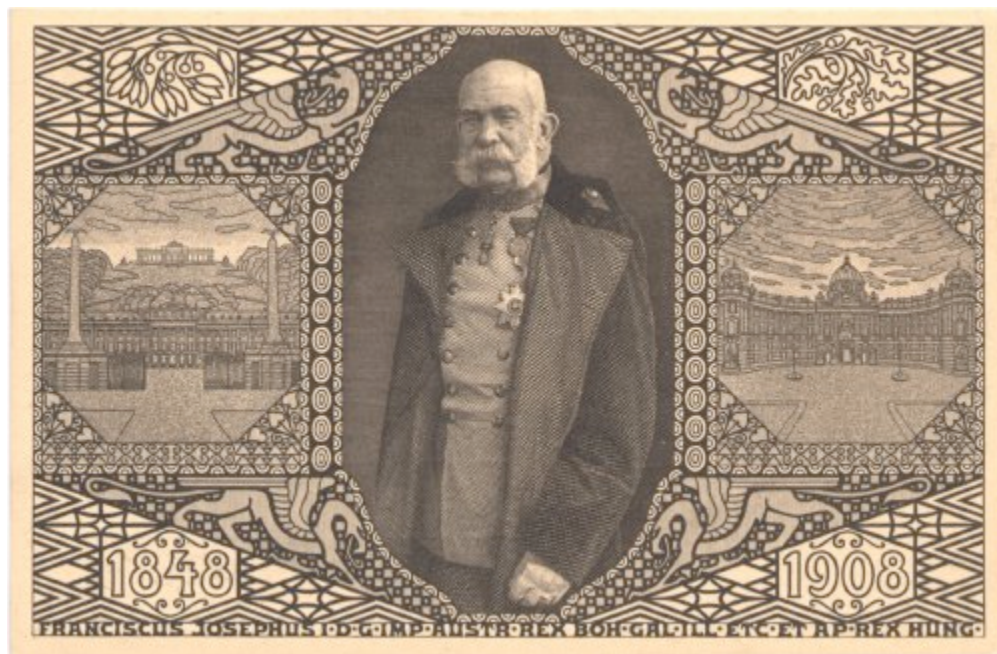
This second postcard by Divéky reveals how people used such graphic objects for a variety of purposes. The image above has been stamped, although the one now on display in the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna (MAK) has been glued to an inexpensively-made paper box. As in postcard #160 (fig. 9), these black and white portraits suggest the influence of photography, juxtaposed as they are in a diptych depicting the eighteen-year old Franz Joseph at the start of his reign and the accomplished man sixty years later in life. The golden framing, which is again abstracted, gives the impression of a gilt wooden frame hanging in a portrait gallery; yet the postcard format of this print allows its owners to hold the museum experience in their own hands, either sending it to a chosen recipient, pasting it onto a box, or saving it as a souvenir of the event – a small-scale work of modern art for their private collections. The golden color evokes a sense of imperial luxury and the black ornamental lines bring to mind fifteenth-century-inspired painting and architecture (bold, new styles, yet very similar to ancient Greek vase painting).

While Divéky's postcards recall fairly traditional imperial portraiture, Remigius Geyling's postcards depict the colorful costumes and lively reenactments of historical events that the parade showcased. Geyling depicted in his designs the specific historical groups that marched in the parade, bringing to life Habsburg history and allowing it to participate in the aesthetic of Viennese high modernism. And the small, portable format of the prints gives the owner or recipient an affordable slice of imperial pageantry. The content of Geyling's postcard designs recalls Emperor Maximilian I's printed triumphal procession, but in a smaller and more widely distributed form than either the sixteenth-century graphic project or the actual Jubilee parade. His palette and use of abstract shapes are often reminiscent of Carl Otto Czeschka's illustrations of the Nibelungen in the same year, which may suggest a cohesive Wiener Werkstätte style for the year 1908.





**Fig. 17**  
**Remigius Geyling, WW postcard #164 (1908)**



**Fig. 18**  
**Koloman Moser, postcard (1908)**

Koloman Moser, who had stopped producing for the Wiener Werkstätte in 1905, also designed postcards for the Jubilee, a gesture that goes back to Klimt's call for personal conflicts to be set aside in the name of cultural progress. Even more striking than in Divéky's postcards, the center portrait of Franz Joseph in this design of Moser's alludes to photography. Due to the fine quality of the sketch, it is difficult at first glance to identify the half-length portrait of the Emperor as a drawing or photograph, especially since the images of Schönbrunn and the Hofburg anchoring Franz Joseph on either side are easier to identify as examples of Moser's unique style. The ornamentation separately frames Franz Joseph and both of his Viennese residences, giving the postcard the effect of an open triptych. The title in block lettering at the bottom presents a number of the Emperor's titles in Latin; these combined with the triptych format, all but turn the postcard into an object of veneration. Moser has elongated and abstracted the gargoyles in each corner framing Franz Joseph, thus combining medieval architectural forms and modernized ornamentation. The outer triangular forms that define the edges of the postcard image are more reminiscent of Moser's jewelry and textile design; and oval- and diamond-shaped accents, suggestive of marcasite, stud the portrait of Franz Joseph. Were this frame actually one of Moser's celebrated pieces of furniture, the shapes would be made out of semi-precious stones and Franz Joseph would be in the material form of marquetry. The postcard mixes styles and suggests the mixing of media in a number of ways: the residences make use of traditional Western drawing techniques with their use of perspective; the metallic-inspired frame design in the shape of diamond cuts and oval settings recall marcasite jewelry; and geometric lines on the outer corners suggest Wiener Werkstätte textile designs. The dates "1848" and "1908" at the bottom sides of the card stress the historical continuity of Franz Joseph's reign that encompassed the disparate styles depicted on the card, while Franz Joseph's titles along the bottom edge form a scrolling narrative of the Emperor's status and accomplishments. The sepia color scheme of the postcard, however, lends itself well to its mass production. In Moser's design, the worlds of architecture, jewelry, textiles, furniture and religious art come together on a piece of paperboard to be either sent to a friend or held onto as a souvenir.<sup>14</sup>

### **Design of the Parade**

The Central Committee stated the primary goal of the parade to be the following: "Die zu Ehren des in Österreich einzig dastehenden Herrscherjubiläums veranstalteten Festlichkeiten müssen auf Wien die Aufmerksamkeit der ganzen Mitwelt lenken und durch die des höheren Anlasses würdige Großartigkeit der Feier ein allgemeines, ein internationales Interesse wecken, das nicht nur Wien allein sondern dem ganzen Reiche zugute kommen wird."<sup>15</sup> This effort to arouse "international" interest for the benefit of the entire empire resonates with Riegl's musings in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie* and his argument that industrialized folk art could raise Austria-Hungary's status as a functioning supranational model for the rest of the world in an era of increasing nationalism. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many Viennese spoke of the sixtieth year Jubilee as a "weltgeschichtliches Ereignis" that would direct the eyes of the

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<sup>14</sup> Many thanks to Michael Loebenstein at the Austrian Film Museum for furnishing me with the original postcard from his family's private collection.

<sup>15</sup> HHSta, OmeA Karton 1838 ex 1908, Mappe 133/2.

whole world towards Vienna. Occasions for imperial pageantry had been widespread over the past three decades. In 1882 Vienna celebrated the 600<sup>th</sup> year of the Habsburg Dynasty and December of 1888 marked Franz Joseph's 40<sup>th</sup> year on the throne. The British Queen, Victoria, celebrated her 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee in 1887 and her spectacular Diamond Jubilee in 1897.<sup>16</sup> Austria observed Franz Joseph's 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee in 1898, under the direction of the Historicist painter Hans Makart, and Hungary marked Franz Joseph's fortieth year as its king in 1907. But both the recent assassination of Empress Sisi and Makart's nostalgic jubilee procession, which had only depicted Habsburg history, cast a melancholic shadow over the celebration. 1908, therefore, presented the opportunity to refresh the monarchy's image by staging an upbeat modern event that not only reflected upon the past, but also demonstrated the lively present and illustrated future hope for the Habsburg state beyond the figure of the aging Franz Joseph.

Count Hans (Johann Nepomuk) Wilczek, best known as the primary sponsor of Austro-Hungarian North Pole Expedition in 1872 and the founder of the *Gesellschaft der Wiener Kunstfreunde* in 1900, was the president of the parade committee and therefore responsible for approving all artistic production for the event. As a strong proponent of Austrian colonialism and modern art, Wilczek sought to structure the parade around the principle of including younger artists in order to ensure its continued support for the imperial cause into the next generation. Wilczek hoped for a unified visual language, created by artists who were willing to express themselves for the greater purpose of imperial pageantry.<sup>17</sup> Students such as Remigius Geyling, who drafted at least six hundred graphic designs and spent two years working on costumes for the parade, were rather enthusiastic about contributing to the event.<sup>18</sup> Berthold Löffler's students at the School of Arts and Crafts also participated as actors in the parade, portraying late eighteenth-century country folk in Group XIII; this additional activity exemplifies the total involvement of these young artists.<sup>19</sup>

From the early stages of planning for the event, the inclusion of modern artists and their work was of utmost importance to the concept of the parade. A fresh look to the Jubilee would suggest that the next generation was able to carry an increasingly industrial Austria-Hungary into the new modern era. In February 1908 the governor of Lower Austria, Count Kielmansegg, in agreement with the Ministry of the Interior, suggested that the planned Jubilee procession bring together prominent personalities from the contemporary Viennese cultural landscape. Although the Emperor was reluctant to participate in such a grand event (he had always been averse to ostentatious celebrations), he did communicate to the director of the artists' cooperative (*Künstlergenossenschaft*), Professor Heinrich von Angeli, that he "could be persuaded to allow the Hagenbund to be involved with the design of the procession."<sup>20</sup> Due to the Emperor's lack of enthusiasm, the committee constantly had to reorganize the parade's structure, inevitably annoying

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<sup>16</sup> Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 bears many similarities to Franz Joseph's eleven years later. The organizers of both events made use of the applied arts in new and creative ways, from limited edition wallpaper and cutlery, to table settings and postcards. Their processions also placed special focus on the multiethnic compositions of the respective empires.

<sup>17</sup> HHStA, OMeA Karton 1838 ex 1908, Mapped 133/2, Prot. No. 1628 from February 7, 1908.

<sup>18</sup> Gerald Szyszkowitz, *Remigius Geyling. Ein Bühnenbildner an der Stilwende der Sezession* (University of Vienna, 1960) 10.

<sup>19</sup> *Die Neue Freie Presse*. Abendblatt Nr. 15736, vom 12. Juni 1908 S. 5.

<sup>20</sup> HHStA, OMeA Karton 1838 ex 1908, Mapped 133/2, Prot. No. 1628 from February 7, 1908.



participants in the process. Franz Joseph's apathetic break with the parade committee in February 1908 resulted in the artists' cooperative (*Künstlergenossenschaft*) and the Secession deciding to distance themselves from the whole event. The artists who continued on the project were primarily the younger ones, some of whom had associated themselves with the Hagenbund and others with Klimt's group. In conjunction with these artists, Count Wilczek designed the historical sections of the procession that were to depict the growth of the Habsburg dynasty from its medieval beginnings to the large modern state it had become during Franz Joseph's reign.

Joseph Urban, a founding member of the Hagenbund and the man who would so famously bring the Wiener Werkstätte to its financial ruin in New York City in the 1930s, was the chief architect of the event, designing the majority of floats, the viewing stands, and Franz Joseph's viewing stand for the parade.<sup>21</sup> The official program for the parade names Urban as the chief artistic force behind the event, although if it had not been for the students at the School of Arts and Crafts, the event never would have enjoyed such large-scale technical success. Originally Josef Hoffmann was to collaborate with the architect and stage designer Urban in decorating the parade's route around the Ringstraße, but the Wiener Werkstätte co-founder bowed out only weeks before the event.<sup>22</sup> The press reported that his motives were of a combined artistic and financial nature; Hoffmann had difficulties working with Lefler and Urban and at the last minute the planning committee announced it would only be able to pay him a fifth of what they had initially offered him.<sup>23</sup> This artistic conflict did not in any way resonate with the utopian vision of Gustav Klimt had proclaimed in his opening speech for the *Kunstschau*. Although the graphic production by modern artists from the Secession, Wiener Werkstätte and Hagenbund for Franz Joseph's celebration was largely successful, the different groups were not able to cooperate successfully in the reenactment of "the state of culture" in Austria for the parade itself.

In the final months leading up to June 12, 1908, *Die Neue Freie Presse* published a daily column entitled "The Parade." This column provided updates on parade preparations, elaborately planned by a joint committee of bureaucrats and artists who were keen to display both the grand historical legacy and the modernization of the monarchy, particularly its liberal stance on ethnic minorities. The June 6<sup>th</sup> edition, for example, discusses in great detail the respective contribution of each crownland to the parade. Those mentioned include not only the traditionally "German" territories of Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria and Vorarlberg, but also the ethnically mixed regions of Bohemia, Dalmatia, Galicia, Carinthia, Carniola, Silesia, Bukowina, Moravia, Istria and Tyrol. Although the total absence of the Kingdom of Hungary is noticeable, the parade nevertheless promises to showcase the majority of ethnic cultures within Austria-Hungary. The newspaper reports on the number of people, horses and carriages coming from the provinces to the capital of Vienna, describing the vibrant costumes and spectacular performances the audience can anticipate from each contingent.

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<sup>21</sup> Urban's involvement with the Wiener Werkstätte, however, came only after his work for the Jubilee celebrations; ultimately he emigrated from Vienna to New York and founded the American branch of the Wiener Werkstätte (which proved to be a financial disaster for the organization, leading to its permanent closure in 1933).

<sup>22</sup> *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* Nr. 109, vom 19. April 1908, S. 18.

<sup>23</sup> *Die Zeit* Nr. 1049, vom 6. Juni 1908, S. 11. "Die Moderne, der er angehört, hat unter den Persönlichkeiten, denen die Beurteilung des künstlerischen Teiles des Festzuges obliegt, zahlreiche Gegner, die sich gegen die Art der Ausführung der Dekorationsarbeiten sträubten."

The cover of the official program features a layout suggestive of a mixed-media object – within its circular frame, Franz Joseph’s portrait resembles a medallion and the margins are reminiscent of the medieval manuscript tradition. Rudolf Junk and Emil Schiller, students at the School of Arts and Crafts and future members of the Wiener Werkstätte, worked on the book’s illustrations of the parade’s historical figures.



**Fig. 19**

**Cover of the parade program, *Kaiser-Jubiläums-Festlichkeiten Wien 1908: Der Huldigungs-Festzug* (Vienna: Christoph Reisser’s Söhne, 1908)**

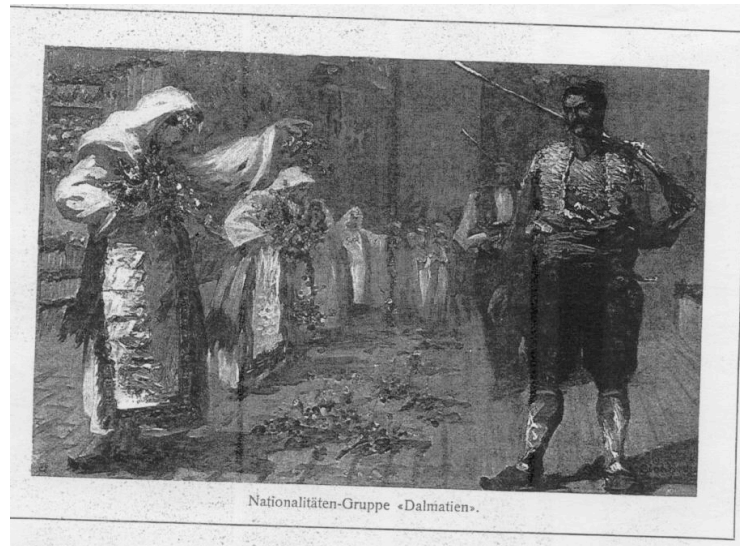


**Fig. 20**  
**Title page of the program**

The program does not, however, depict visually the participants coming from the crown lands, perhaps because artists of those respective groups were responsible for their own presentation and because they were not in Vienna where the event was being organized. However, the writers of the program do provide short descriptions of the colorful peoples and customs that will descend upon the city, piquing the curiosity of the reader but without providing any visual indication of what to expect.

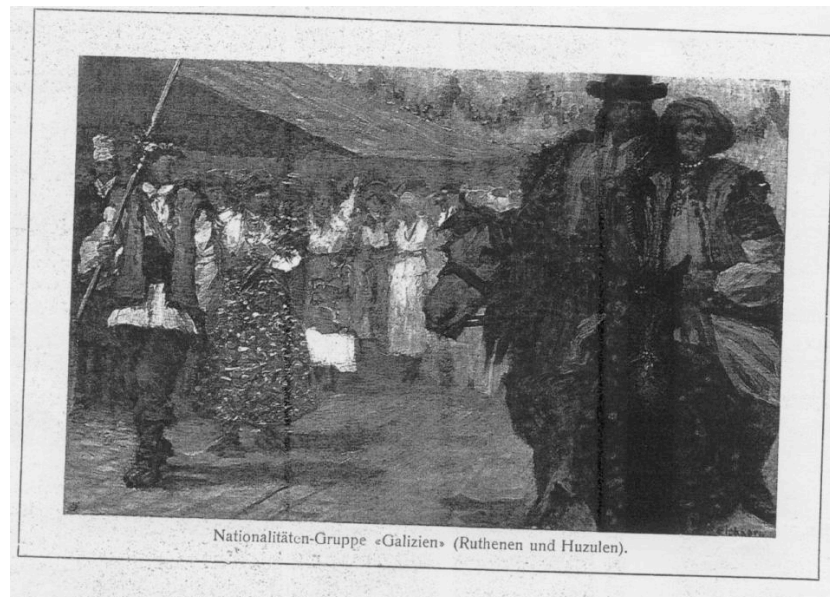
We, however, can juxtapose the quasi-ethnographic descriptions in the program with the lively designs of watercolor postcards that the younger Viennese artists designed to depict the “Parade of Nations.” The program details the inherent attributes of each ethnic group to be showcased in the parade, as well as exactly how they will be represented. The introduction states that all representatives of such groups, men, women and children, are rushing to the imperial capital to praise Franz Joseph, with their old-fashioned manners and customs.

The program describes that a group that will include 330 Dalmatian men and women in their original magnificent costumes, which they have had since ancient times (“uralt”). Their closeness to both the Orient and to Italy is especially remarkable, so the description continues, and their Venetian and Turkish histories continue to shine through their festive dress. The men dress similarly to the Turks, their costume rich in gold embroidery and silk, with turbans on their heads.



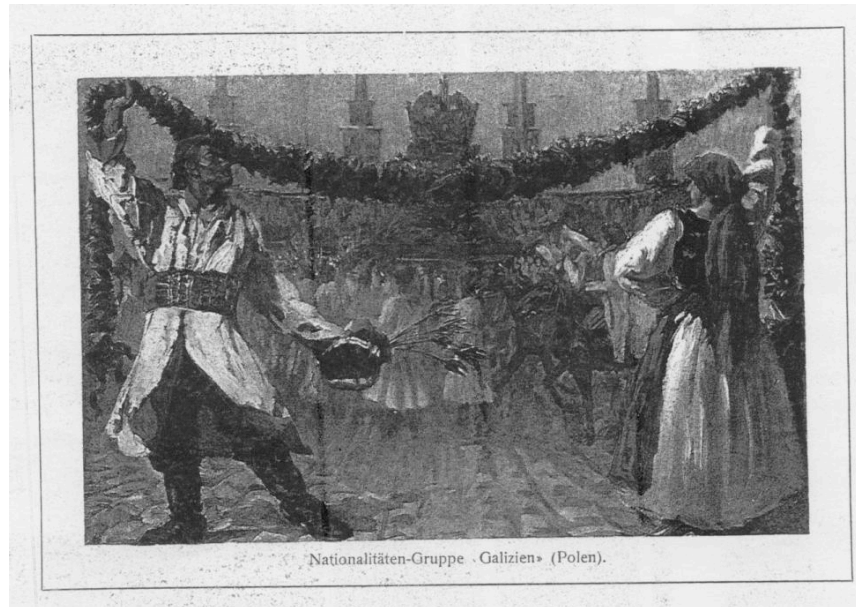
**Fig. 21**  
**Postcard depicting the Dalmatian group in the “Parade of Nations” (1908)**

The program characterizes the 500 Galicians in the parade by their ethnic diversity and colorful festive costumes. The Ruthenian population loves to ride horses and harvest grain. 800 Poles from Cracow also participate in the parade, marked by their special Polish customs, luxurious dress, fiery dances and sharp, rhythmic music.



**Fig. 22**  
**Postcard depicting the Galician group, including Ruthenians and Hutsuls (1908)**





**Fig. 23**  
**Postcard depicting the Poles in the Galician group (1908)**

On the day of the parade, twelve thousand residents of the Habsburg Empire marched around the Ringstrasse, four thousand in historical costume and eight thousand wearing ethnic clothing representative of the diversity of the crownlands – the latter group was essentially the *Kronprinzenwerk* come to life.<sup>24</sup> The organizers intended for the procession to showcase the empire’s glorious history, as well as the Habsburgs’ success in creating a harmonious multiethnic empire. In reality, however, the parade exacerbated nationalist tensions by exposing cultural conflicts on both linguistic and visual levels. What had been intended to be a celebration of supranationalism under the liberal and modern guidance of Franz Joseph instead presented the urban, largely ethnically German Viennese as more culturally advanced and the rural, largely Slavic peoples of the crown lands as unmodern and culturally static. Contrary to imperial intentions, the diverse manifestations of the applied arts program had succeeded in exposing the roots of nationalism through the production of folk art, rather than enabling a transformation of folk forms into a unified, greater Habsburg aesthetic for a modern era. The modernist framework provided by the advertising campaign (posters and postcards) of the Viennese hosts did not match up with the folk-ish content provided by the city’s guests from the provinces. While, depending on the observer, this contrast might have been viewed as a striking example of cultural pluralism, the parade was poorly coordinated to further the aesthetic unity that the imperial applied arts program had been striving toward.

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<sup>24</sup> In 1884 Crown Prince Rudolf initiated the highly influential *Österreich-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild* project, most commonly referred to as the *Kronprinzenwerk*. Between 1884 and 1902 writers, artists and politicians worked together in the name of the House of Habsburg to produce a twenty-four volume, dual-language (German and Hungarian) work celebrating the diverse landscapes and cultures of Austria-Hungary. Within its pages, 587 articles described the geography, history, flora and fauna, art and architecture, literature and music of crown lands, with around 4,500 illustrations by 264 different artists accompanying the text.

The success of the parade was as dependent on the spectators as it was on the artists and politicians who created it, arguably more so. The attendees represented many different segments of Viennese society and were committed to an entire day of imperial pageantry.<sup>25</sup> Those who were unable to afford a proper seat in the stands also had the opportunity to rent out balconies and windows in the apartment buildings lining the parade route.<sup>26</sup> Between 300,000 and 500,000 spectators came out on June 12 (roughly a quarter of the city's population): 110,000 sat in the grandstand, 5,000 were inside the *Festplatz* and 105,000 placed themselves along the sections of the Ringstraße that were not covered by the *Festplatz*. About 9,000 court officials sat in reserved stands in the Prater and near the Urania. 550 spectators stood on the roofs of the Museums of Natural and Art History, and 1,400 on the roof of the Opera and Burgtheater.<sup>27</sup>

The first half of the parade showcased the history of the Habsburg dynasty, and several members of the Wiener Werkstätte were responsible for designing the actual costumes and offering a preview of the historical procession that began with Rudolf I and ended with the period just before the start of Franz Joseph's reign. Wiener Werkstätte and Hagenbund artists, along with their students at the School of Arts and Crafts, worked together outfitting the "actors" who played noble historical figures (many of whom were actual descendents of the noble characters they were portraying). The historical parade not only recalled the memories and events of the past, but it also offered lessons for the present and optimism for the future trajectory of the Habsburg Empire. The second part of the parade focusing on the state's different nationalities (*Nationalitätenfestzug*) should then have functioned as what Brigitte Hamann has referred to as a "psychology of folk life," encompassing not only the habits of the peoples of the crown lands, but also their inclinations, customs, mistakes and virtues, the character and the might in which they situate themselves.<sup>28</sup> Together these two halves of the parade were to demonstrate how young artists could mold the Empire into a modern state; the raw materials for this enterprise were the inherently "exotic" inhabitants and cultural resources of the crown lands. The Jubilee parade was designed to draw the spectator's gaze away from the figure of the Emperor and toward the "Parade of Nations," focusing the crowd's attention on both what the Empire had become and what it proclaimed as its future.

But national conflicts arose from the very first stages of planning for the anniversary celebration. Perhaps the largest issue involved Hungary, which announced early on that it would not take part in the year's festivities. The reason for this was that while 1848 did mark beginning of the reign of Franz Joseph over the Magyar population, it was the Compromise of 1867 that officially made him King of Hungary; 1908 was therefore not a jubilee year for Hungary, which had appropriately honored the emperor on the fortieth anniversary of his Hungarian coronation only a year before in 1907. A

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<sup>25</sup> The authorities even commissioned a film of the parade, later shown at the Busch-Kino in the Prater. The original film had a length of 2,500 meters, which at the time corresponded to a total running time of over two hours. I am greatly indebted to Christian Dewald, director of the Austrian Film Archive, for watching the film and discussing the magnitude of this spectacle with me.

<sup>26</sup> The renting out of balconies becomes an object of satire in Karl Kraus's essay "Der Festzug," which I will discuss in chapter 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Neues Wiener Journal* 12 Juni 1908: 4.

<sup>28</sup> See the protocols of the editorial committee (*Redaktionskomitee*) as cited by Brigitte Hamann in her doctoral dissertation, *Das Leben des Kronprinzen Rudolf nach neuen Quellen* (University of Vienna, 1977) 421.

Budapest newspaper from June 12, 1908 wished His Majesty well for the day's events, yet explained that no Hungarian would want to participate in the Austrian parade because of Austrian hatred of and disrespect for the Hungarian people.<sup>29</sup> There was also much conflict with the Czech minorities, who planned to stage Moravian and Russian plays, as well as a production of *Hamlet* in the Czech language in Vienna, as contributions to the Jubilee. Viennese Mayor Karl Lueger denied them this opportunity, claiming that the proposed performances were not in line with the German character of the city of Vienna. The *Deutsches Volksblatt* also took this stance, arguing that if the Viennese wanted to see a Czech production of *Hamlet*, they should go to Prague to do so.<sup>30</sup>

Although various ethnic groups swore allegiance to Franz Joseph in most of the languages of the monarchy, and artists from Linz to Lemberg helped realize the event, the apparent objective of multicultural harmony remained merely illusory in this spectacle. The Hungarians, the largest non-German nationality of the empire,<sup>31</sup> were not present, and German nationalists fervently demonstrated that they did not support the empire's supranationalist program. Brigitte Hamann, in her book *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship*, comments on how those inhabitants from the outlying realms of Austria-Hungary experienced profound disorientation when they came to Vienna for the celebration. She writes that the Viennese encountered these strange rural peoples face to face, in numbers never before seen; in turn, the visitors moved about the modern urban center in a clumsy, shy and helpless manner—many of these provincial visitors did not speak German, and it is unlikely that they and the largely German-speaking Viennese were able to communicate effectively with one another. The presence of these strangers, who in actuality represented the majority of the Habsburg territories, made the Viennese feel quite uncomfortable in their own city. According to Hamann, most residents of the city were not excited by the opportunity to finally see these poorer, more “ethnic” residents of the monarchy, but rather felt intense animosity toward them, viewing them as ugly, primitive, and culturally backward.<sup>32</sup>

The *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* reported, “Auf dem Schottenring wurden die Tribünen mit weißem Fahmentuch bezogen, das ein unverfälschtes ‘Sezessions’-Muster in Violette-Gelb zierte.”<sup>33</sup> The Secessionist-style pattern was immediately recognizably to the greater Viennese public. The high modernist decoration of the stands, however, highlights the disparity between the purely ornamental aspect of the parade and the people on display in the procession. The historical section of the parade had an equally staged and stylized look, as many of the actors' costumes and groups were based on Early Modern paintings and graphics (as in the case of the Maximilian I group's Dürer-inspired costumes). But the nationalities who marched and danced around the Ringstraße were less well choreographed and costumed, and to the urban viewers, at least, appeared largely uncouth.

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<sup>29</sup> Brigitte Hamann, *Hitlers Wien: Lehrjahre eines Diktators* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1996) 142.

<sup>30</sup> Hamann 142.

<sup>31</sup> István Deák's book *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps 1848-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) offers a nice breakdown of nationalities residing in the Habsburg Monarchy ca. 1910. In the introduction, Deák counts ethnic Germans as having constituted 23.36% of the entire population, while ethnic Hungarians accounted for 19.57%. The Czechs and Poles come in third and fourth with 12.54% and 9.68%, respectively.

<sup>32</sup> Hamann 147.

<sup>33</sup> *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* 12. Juni 1908: 5.

The morning edition of *Die Neue Freie Presse* on June 13, 1908—the day after the parade—finds the newspaper reflecting on the actual success of this highly anticipated event. More than three hundred thousand people had come to partake in the spectacle, and “all were deeply moved by the thoughts of reverence for the emperor, all were refreshed by the desire to see something new, something lively, upon which, at the same time, the bright dew drops of true artistry and the most gracious Viennese jollity seemed to shine.”<sup>34</sup> The writer also comments on the historical aspect of the parade, which, although great, did not affect the public as much as the more contemporary scenes that showcased the lively and colorful cultures from throughout the empire. The following quote attempts to put a positive spin on the event that has drawn so many vastly different subjects to the imperial capital, while it enumerates in painful detail the obstacles to uniting inhabitants of the monarchy: “[People] often complain about the difficulty of ruling Austria. Eight nationalities live here in seventeen lands, and the cultural distances have to be measured in more than eight degrees of latitude. In order to rule Austria, all that has to be united in one point. Today one saw the spectacle of the unification of men and women of almost every nationality at one point and to one purpose.”<sup>35</sup>

Although the front page of the morning edition paints a favorable picture of the events of June 12, 1908, the evening edition of June 13 reports on the more problematic aspects of the elaborate parade. In what is presumably the final contribution on “The Parade,” the writer concludes: “Vienna may be happy about the parade in every aspect. Only one dark cloud obscures the blue sky. But what this cloud contains, one cannot yet judge with the necessary certainty. We mean the financial effect of the parade.”<sup>36</sup> The financial distress this extravagant event has brought on the city of Vienna seems evident, and the fact that this journalist describes it as a dark cloud makes it all the more ominous, letting one wonder if the parade really was worth the expense. The precise repercussions of the celebration remain undetermined, but the journalist’s report seems to anticipate a negative financial outcome.

The newspaper’s review of the parade also touches on the issue of nationalism, describing how the various ethnic groups sitting in the grandstand asserted their respective linguistic identities:

There was a largely unintended, but repeatedly stormy demonstration in the loud jubilation, with which the German cries of ‘Heil’ alternated with the Croatian ‘Zivio!’ Each acclamation of the Romanians, Poles, Ruthenians found its echo in the delegates’ grandstand, and the ‘Evviva!’ of the

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<sup>34</sup> “Wien, 12. Juni,” *Die Neue Freie Presse* 13 June 1908: 1. “Sie waren alle tief berührt durch den Gedanken an die Huldigung für die Kaiser, alle erfrischt von der Begierde, etwas Neues, Lebendiges zu sehen, worauf gleichsam die hellen Tautropfen echter Künstlerschaft und der graziösesten wienerischen Fröhlichkeit zu blinken scheinen.”

<sup>35</sup> “Wien, 12. Juni” 1. “Sehr oft wird über die Schwierigkeit geklagt, Oesterreich zu regieren. Acht Nationalitäten in siebzehn Ländern leben hier, und die Kulturdistanzen müssen durch mehr als acht Breitengrade abgemessen werden. Das alles muß auf einem Punkt vereinigt werden, um in Oesterreich zu regieren. Heute war das Schauspiel einer Vereinigung von Männern und Frauen fast aller Nationalitäten an einem Punkt und in einem Zweck zu sehen.”

<sup>36</sup> “Der Festzug,” *Die Neue Freie Presse* 13 June 1908: 2. “...Wien darf sich in jeder Hinsicht des gelungenen Festzuges freuen. Nur eine dunkle Wolk trübt das blaue Firmament. Was diese Wolke enthält, darüber kann man allerdings heute noch nicht mit der nötigen Sicherheit urteilen. Wir meinen das finanzielle Ergebnis des Festzuges.”



representatives of the Italians in parliament was applauded in the *Volkshaus*. Each group wanted to distinguish itself here; they danced their national dances on the wide parquet floor of the Ringstraße, their bands played national tunes, their singers sang national songs. The wealth of national life in Austria, in its natural nativeness, showed its most luminous qualities, and the entire fascinating image of the parade obtained new power at this point.<sup>37</sup>

Depending on the perspective – that of the monarchy, the visiting “nations,” or the people of Vienna – one could read this passage as an account of either cacophony or joyful polyphony. The report describes the kind of circumstance that often produced tensions among the Germans, Poles, Croats, Ruthenians and Italians in the Empire; it attributes the exuberance of the individual national groups, however, not to competition or animosity among them, but rather to the “natural nativeness” of the “wealth of nation life in Austria,” that is, to the multicultural glory of the Empire. These affirming acts of nationalist sentiment become associated with the individual qualities of the Empire that made up its whole. The placement of this text, well into the body of the newspaper, while the front page proclaims the full success of the Jubilee, suggests that assertions of national identity may in fact have presented a problem that the mainstream press was intent on masking. The descriptions of the shouts in different languages and the ensuing responses may also point to ethnic tensions among spectators, rather than create a sense of imperial unity. The thunderous aural atmosphere precipitated by this multilingual moment reflects the vibrant visual expressions of folk art in the parade, which were cause for either celebration on the part of imperial supporters or revulsion on the part of the growing number of German nationalists in Lueger’s Vienna. The reporter’s ambiguous description of the spectators’ reaction to the “Parade of Nations leaves it up to the reader to understand the implied subtext. Was the “stormy demonstration in the loud jubilation” to be read as unmitigated enthusiasm for the transnational Empire or as evidence of gathering ethnic tensions within it?

In the long term, the parade displayed prominently and publicly the pre-World-War-I ethnic tensions in Central Europe, which in turn undermined the remaining events of the Jubilee celebration. In the aftermath of the parade, related imperial festivities were considerably more sedate, since the crown lands received no further formal invitations to come to the imperial capital. This exclusion of the provinces became quite clear as the year came to a close, as the conservative *Die Neue Freie Presse* reported urgently on the growing unrest throughout the Empire. The Jubilee of 1908 thus marked the increasing disinclination on the part of all inhabitants of the Dual Monarchy to uphold the imperial dream of a successful multiethnic state, and the shift toward nationalism that would

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<sup>37</sup> “Der Nationalitätenzug vor der Parlamentstribüne,” *Die Neue Freie Presse* 13 June 1908: 3. “Es lag eine vielleicht unbeabsichtigte, aber wiederholt stürmische Demonstration in dem lauten Jubel, mit welchem die Heil-Rufe der Deutschen mit dem Zivio! der Kroaten wechselten, jeder Zuruf der Rumänen, Polen, Ruthenen sein Echo auf der Abgeordnetentribüne fand und das Evviva! der Italiener von den Vertretern der Italiener im Volkshause akklamiert wurde. Jede Gruppe wollte sich hier auszeichnen; sie tanzten ihre nationalen Tänze auf dem breiten Parkett der Ringstraße, ihre Musikbanden spielten nationale Weisen, ihre Sänger sangen nationale Lieder, der Reichtum des nationalen Lebens in Oesterreich in seiner natürlichen Ursprünglichkeit zeigte seine glänzendsten Eigenschaften und das ganze faszinierende Bild des Zuges erhielt an diesem Punkte neue Kraft.”

become the path of Central Europe in the decades that followed. The parade was symptomatic of so many political difficulties that were threatening the Habsburg state, and the utopian prospect of a functional international style through imperial design was by no means able to remedy the situation at hand.

After the parade, the city of Vienna no longer had the financial resources to mount another such spectacle, although the anniversary plans did call for another major public event on December 1<sup>st</sup>. The date marked the exact sixtieth anniversary of the Emperor's ascension to the throne in 1848, and there were elaborate plans to illuminate key sites throughout Vienna, using the most modern technology of gas lighting. *Die Neue Freie Presse*, however, failed to give the event the extensive coverage it had devoted to the parade, probably since there were now more pressing events taking place around the empire. The front page of December 1, 1908 reports the violent unrest in Prague, where the Austrian flag has been torn down from buildings in the Czech capital, the Radetzky Monument has been stoned, and the Czechs have demonstrated their Slavic allegiances by cheering Serbia.<sup>38</sup> The Bohemian imperial authorities have done nothing to stop this mockery of the monarchy, and even the conservative landed gentry have remained silent observers.<sup>39</sup> This Czech story continues for another four pages, and is followed by small reports in the "Domestic Affairs" section that detail further trouble throughout the Empire: Slovenian students are demonstrating in Graz and calling for the establishment of their own university in Ljubljana; Italian nationalist students are also protesting in Graz; and in Lviv (Lemberg) the Polish People's Party is gaining strength.<sup>40</sup>

It is only after all this that the paper moves on to the local Viennese news, namely that on November 30, 1908 the Emperor Franz Joseph left the Hofburg at 4:30pm for Schönbrunn, where he would spend the night. The Jubilee event is also briefly mentioned, as preparations are underway for the illumination of St. Stephen's Cathedral, the Parliament and City Hall. As usual, the Emperor will arrive at the Hofburg early in the morning, but will leave for Schönbrunn at 1 p.m., as a group of young princes and princesses are putting on a theatrical presentation for him at 2 p.m. A big surprise is tacked onto the end of the paragraph: "The Emperor will not leave Schönbrunn in the evening and therefore will *not* witness the great illumination. However, he did in fact have an opportunity tonight to take in the numerous beautiful illuminated objects on Mariahilferstraße and in front of the Westbahnhof, as their owners lit them up as the Emperor drove by."<sup>41</sup> The fact that Franz Joseph himself refuses to make an appearance for

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<sup>38</sup> "An den Vortagen des Regierungsjubiläums wurden in Prag die österreichischen Fahnen beschimpft. In jenem denkwürdigen Momente, da der Rückblick auf die weitreichende Vergangenheit eines sehr bewegten Lebens in jedem Gebildeten ohne Rücksicht auf seine nationale und politische Gesinnung tiefere Stimmungen hervorruft; in einem solchen Augenblicke, da historische Eindrücke und das Gefühl, vom Auslande beobachtet zu werden, von selbst zu einer würdigen Haltung drängen, sind die österreichischen Farben von den Gebäuden in Prag entfernt, ist das Radetzky-Denkmal mit Steinen beworfen worden, haben die Czechen in Prag mit Hoch-Rufen auf Serbien demonstriert. Niemals, so lange diese Monarchie besteht, konnte von einem solchen wiedernden Zynismus berichtet werden. Was da geschah, ist nicht mehr menschlich, sondern bodenlos gemein und ein Schandmal für alle Zeiten...."

<sup>39</sup> "Wien, 30. November," *Die Neue Freie Presse* 1 December 1908: 1.

<sup>40</sup> "Inland," *Die Neue Freie Presse* 1 December 1908: 7.

<sup>41</sup> "Die morgige Illumination," *Die Neue Freie Presse* 1 December 1908: 9. "Der Kaiser verläßt am Abend das Schönbrunner Schloß nicht und wird somit *nicht* Zeuge der großen Illumination sein. Wohl aber hatte der Kaiser heute abends Gelegenheit, die zahlreichen schönen Beleuchtungsobjekte in der Mariahilferstraße und

one last public celebration in his honor suggests his weariness, and his preference for a celebration staged by his grandchildren over yet another event organized by imperial and city officials.

With “Vienna in Festive Attire,” the evening edition of December 1, 1908 does a bit more to promote the illumination that evening, although this piece shares the front page with two other articles, “New Threats with Extraordinary Measures in Prague” and “Demonstrations Restarted in Prague.”<sup>42</sup> The piece on the illumination boasts that the latest technology in electric lighting will be used to honor the Emperor; it does not mention the likelihood of his absence; and it includes the following rather telling remark:

Even in the radiant splendor of lights that will be lit for the Jubilee celebration, the thought of the shadow of politics will still not be torn away. The Jubilee finds a very serious mood among the people. The situation from the outside instills concern. The economic relations show some reverses, and the news from Prague reveals a rupture, that to this point no one has been able to heal... The eternal problems of Austrian politics also show up on the Jubilee day, and the loud cries of conflict are not silent even for the historical commemorative festivities. It will be a Jubilee, full of sympathy for the person of the Emperor, full of warmth for him, full of good wishes for the late night of his life, and full of reflection about everything that the past has brought and what the unknown future may yet bring.<sup>43</sup>

Gone is the optimism the newspaper had expressed just six months earlier; now it acknowledges without hesitation that the reign of Franz Joseph will come to an end sooner rather than later, and that the grave prospect of an Austrian future without him will need to be considered.

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vor dem Westbahnhofe in Augenschein zu nehmen, deren Besitzer während der Vorbeifahrt des Kaisers die Beleuchtungsapparate in Funktion setzten.”

<sup>42</sup> “Neue Drohungen mit außerordentlichen Maßregeln in Prag,” and “Neuerliche Demonstrationen in Prag.” *Neue Freie Presse* 1 December 1908: 1.

<sup>43</sup> “Wien im Festschmuck,” *Die Neue Freie Presse* 1 December 1908: 1. “Selbst in dem strahlenden Glanz der Lichter, die zur Feier des Jubiläumfestes angezündet werden, wird jedoch der Gedanke von den Schatten der Politik sich nicht losreißen können. Das Jubiläum findet eine sehr ernste Stimmung im Volke. Die auswärtige Lage flößt Sorgen ein. Die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse zeigen manchen Rückgang, und die Nachrichten aus Prag enthüllen ein Gebrest, das bisher niemand zu heilen vermochte... Die ewigen Probleme der österreichischen Politik melden sich auch am Jubiläumstag, und die lauten Rufe des Streites verstummen selbst an den historischen Erinnerungsfesten nicht. Es wird ein Jubiläum sein, voll Sympathie für die Person des Kaisers, voll Herzlichkeit für ihn, voll guter Wünsche für den Spätabend seines Lebens und voll Nachdenklichkeit über alles, was die Vergangenheit gebracht hat und die unbekannt Zukunft noch bringen mag.”

The morning edition of December 2, 1908 devotes less than half a paragraph to the illumination in the four-page spread honoring Franz Joseph, his history and his legacy. This contrasts sharply with the extensive coverage of the parade in June, suggesting that attendance and overall excitement had not been particularly high. There is no mention of the illumination in the evening edition, which instead focuses on the “Days of Terror” in Prague. And in the remaining days of December, which mark the end of Franz Joseph’s anniversary year, *Die Neue Freie Presse* makes no further mention of the Jubilee, focusing instead on the continuing turmoil in Prague and the mounting socialist demonstrations in Budapest. What had started out as a year full of optimistic celebration of the Habsburg Empire ultimately ends on a rather dismal note.

## CHAPTER 3

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# Perpetrating Ornament: Karl Kraus and Adolf Loos vs. the Peoples of Austria

“Wenn aber die österreichischen Nationalitäten so aussehen, wie die Proben, die uns noch heute auf den Wiener Straßen die Passage sperren, dann, glaube ich, könnte der Einheitsgedanke der Häßlichkeit zu einer Verständigung führen.”

- Karl Kraus, “Nachträgliche Vorurteile gegen den Festzug” (1908)

“Und im jubiläumsfestzuge gingen völkerschaften mit, die selbst während der völkerwanderungen als rückständig empfunden worden wären.”

- Adolf Loos, “Ornament und Verbrechen” (1908)

The 1908 Jubilee provided much fuel for the incendiary writings of the journalist Karl Kraus and the architect Adolf Loos. Ludwig Hevesi and others praised the parade for its total artistic achievement, from the modern graphic works that advertised it to the folk and historical costumes that adorned its players, yet for Kraus and Loos the event displayed merely the anachronistic character of the old Empire. Although the two friends would certainly have agreed with Klimt’s statement that the year 1908 should exhibit the current state of culture in Austria, their critical responses had much less to do with an aestheticized vision of a vibrant multiethnic state than with the political reality of an empire being torn apart by its disparate constituents. Kraus’s sentiments run counter to the intentions of the parade’s designers, specifically those in Vienna who had supposed that their counterparts in the crown lands would have executed their “Parade of Nations” in a way that complemented the historical procession created by leading modernists in the imperial capital. The Viennese artists had hoped the parade performances would embody and make visible the imperial unity and cultural understanding that was shared by the inhabitants of the Habsburg state. Kraus comments ironically that, given the drastically disparate appearances of the different nationalities, it is only a notion of ugliness that unites Austria. Adolf Loos, in his seminal essay “Ornament and Crime,” also invokes the Jubilee when he proclaims the absence of cultural evolution in Vienna; he argues that some of the peoples of the Empire are so backward that they antedate the Migration Period that began in the

fourth century. In stating this, Loos reveals his belief in the obliteration of aesthetic difference, specifically through a formal progression that culminates in absolute minimalism. This privileging of the simple, clean-surfaced unity of modernism clashes with Alois Riegl's ideas about the aesthetic equality of all time periods and their cultural products. While Riegl might have celebrated the visual mosaic of the Jubilee, the conjunction of newly fashioned imperial decorative excess and flourishing tradition folk costumes functioned as a catalyst for Loos's critique of the role of ornament in the modern democratic state.

A brief glance at Karl Kraus's initial criticisms of the modern craft movement is essential to grasping his dismay at the imperial spectacle, and the relationship of his writings to the study of Adolf Loos below. Kraus had been writing against the practitioners of the imperial design program since 1901, using the School for Arts and Crafts as his primary target; and by the time of the 1908 Jubilee, he had already developed an informed but highly programmatic critique. In his first mention of modern design in *Die Fackel*, Kraus criticizes the work of the young Josef Hoffmann to illuminate the fleeting nature of this aesthetic for life:

Wenn ihn nicht die Continuität des Bewusstseins davor bewahrte, Herr Hoffmann würde heute die aus Kreisflächen zusammengesetzten Möbel und die Kasten mit dem trapezförmigen Längsdurchschnitt, die er vor drei Jahren entwarf, als falsche Secession bezeichnen. Von dem Hoffmann-Stil wie vom Olbrich-Stil, deren wienerische Note seinerzeit in den Börsenkreisen in Cours kam, ist heute nichts mehr übrig geblieben, und man begnügt sich, englische und amerikanische Möbel mit jenen Varianten zu adaptieren, die das geistige Eigentum des Architekten Adolf Loos sind.<sup>1</sup>

This statement not only highlights the strong respect Kraus has for Loos, but it also voices a strong objection to the commercial endeavors of the Wiener Werkstätte and of Hoffmann in particular. For Kraus, these rapid changes in style signal a false sense of authenticity and artistic integrity to the modern consumer, who is in his view purchasing nothing more than bad Austrian imitations of the British Arts and Crafts style. Kraus praises instead authentic forms from America and Britain, which, he maintains, also comprise the intellectual property of the architect Loos.

Kraus argues that the artistic instruction in the School for Arts and Crafts (under the direction of von Scala) encourages artists to produce merely imitative pieces and do nothing more than plagiarize the styles of others in the hope of making a profit:

Wenn der Geschäftsgeist der Herren von der Secession sich als künstlerische Gesinnung drapiert, so lässt Herr Scala den seinen als Förderung des künstlerischen Kleingewerbes paradien. Jene haben, so oft ein Tischler ein Möbel arbeitete, das nicht so sehr einem Vandevelde'schen Original, wie seiner Olbrich'schen oder Hoffmann'schen Verballhornung ähnelte, natürlich nur im Interesse der Reinheit des Kunststils, die durch

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Kraus, *Die Fackel* 3, no. 89 (1901) 21.

schlechte Nachahmungen bedroht war, über den Diebstahl geistigen Eigenthums geschrien.<sup>2</sup>

For Kraus the insincere production of the applied arts has become a moral issue. Not only does he challenge the purity of individual artistic style in Secessionist circles, but he also declares their imitations of others' designs to be tantamount to theft of intellectual property. By conflating the corruption (*Verballhornung*) of furniture styles with the bureaucratic demands of school and museum's director von Scala, Kraus addresses the clearly defined relationship between imperial policy and artistic practices in Austria around 1900.

Kraus asks further how von Scala has been able to foster the manufacture of such products that masquerade as "art," conveying the need to win over the artisan in the process:

Er [von Scala] hat, unter der Leitung des Herrn Hammel, im Museum ein Atelier, das demnächst noch vergrößert werden soll, errichtet, einen kleinen Fabriksbetrieb, in dem Motive, soweit es nöthig ist, damit der Musterschutz nicht verletzt werde, umgearbeitet werden. *Und er lässt mit diesen Mustern Schulen in der Provinz und Gewerbetreibende betheiligen, verbreitet, anstatt die Originalitätssucht zu bekämpfen, eine falsche Originalität.*<sup>3</sup>

The small-scale factory, under the auspices of the museum director, is the site of the industrial production of decorative motifs that Riegl explains in his *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*. By participating in this model of production, provincial schools and industrial entrepreneurs fail to strive for true originality and instead promote "false originality," adapting motives, as Kraus continues above, "so that they do not infringe copyright." His statement about false originality resonates with Berta Zuckermandl's views on authentic and fake folk art, and it also anticipates the problems inherent in the highly choreographed applied arts program seven years before the participating artists would reveal their designs in public for the 1908 Jubilee.

In March of 1908 Kraus began writing a weekly segment in *Die Fackel* entitled "The Parade," in which he parodies the column that ran daily in *Die Neue Freie Presse* for three months in anticipation of the Jubilee. Although these particular essays of Kraus's focus largely on the historical narratives depicted in the parade, a brief look at the first installment focuses on the perceived public obsession with the Jubilee's significance for the modern imperial state.<sup>4</sup> Kraus picks up on the great sense of expectation on the part of the press and the planning committee, who predict the following response from all imperial residents: "When they come to visit there will be something to see and to hear, and the loyalty that knows no political boundary will be the basis upon which the committee

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<sup>2</sup> Karl Kraus, *Die Fackel* 3, no. 89 (1901) 22.

<sup>3</sup> My emphasis. Karl Kraus, *Die Fackel* 3, no. 89 (1901) 23.

<sup>4</sup> I examine this series of essays more thoroughly in an article-in-progress on the function of historicity in 1908.

quietly forms itself and a channel in the current of the world.”<sup>5</sup> The organizers hope that those loyal subjects coming to Vienna from the outlying Habsburg lands will accept the supranational myth, given that the local organizers have directed the spectacle through a channel lined with imperial propaganda.

Kraus continues on to discuss the future event, this time in the simple past tense and past perfect tenses, presenting it as both a fairytale and an accomplished fact. He writes, “The year had come and the day was near. A feverish excitement had seized all of the participating groups. Only one thought ruled all minds, set all feet in motion: The parade! The people need the parade like a bite of bread. This is the great opportunity, where finally everyone can participate!”<sup>6</sup> In Kraus’s description, the organizers have convinced the public to subscribe to this parade-mania, an occasion that will nourish the entire empire, and thus sustain its vigor for years to come. He criticizes the time, energy and money that have been devoted to this futile event, commenting ironically that this is all a sign of the true loyalty exercised by those involved in the planning. In the end, he foresees that the Jubilee will have a sad result and returns to the opening quote: “The historical costume fanatic hopes that he will at least succeed in showing with a Wallenstein ensemble how to cheat the populace out of a spectacle.”<sup>7</sup> For Kraus, a pathetic outcome is inevitable, and the parade will function as nothing more than a public deception, falsely representing the actual implications of the empire’s historical and cultural legacies. His reference to the historical costume fanatic, however, reveals the deceptive function of ornament in the Jubilee. What the parade’s designers had intended to cast as an authentic piece of imperial history (and one representative of the textile branch of the applied arts), instead becomes emblematic of the sham that is Habsburg pageantry. Despite the fact that Kraus’s weekly “Parade” purports to expose the spectacle before it has even transpired, his insistence on its inevitable failure highlights the extent to which these imperial forms of display and performance art are already familiar to the anticipated audience of spectators. Kraus’s earlier comment on the universal sense of participation afforded by the parade suggests that these historical Habsburg images are imbedded in the public consciousness and therefore will not challenge the audience’s imagination. The centrality of historical costume in the parade suggests that the designers of the event knew they could no longer persuade the public of the relevance of these apparently authentic stories and tales from Habsburg history for the way they viewed their own cultural condition at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the final installment of “The Parade,” published on June 5, 1908, one week exactly before the event, Kraus returns to the economics of modern design and the imperial state. He opens the parodic piece with the following statement:

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<sup>5</sup> Karl Kraus, *Die chinesische Mauer* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987) 162. “Wenn sie zu Besuch kommen, so gibts manches zu sehen und zu hören, und die Loyalität, die keine politischen Grenze kennt, ist die Basis, auf der sich ein Komitee in der Stille bildet und ein Spalier im Strom der Welt.”

<sup>6</sup> Kraus 163. My emphasis. “Das Jahr war gekommen und der Tag war nah. Eine fieberhafte Erregung hatte sich aller beteiligten Kreise bemächtigt. Nur ein Gedanke beherrschte alle Köpfe, setzte alle Füße in Bewegung: Der Festzug! Das Volk braucht den Festzug wie einen Bissen Brot! Das ist die große Gelegenheit, wo endlich alle dabei sein können!”

<sup>7</sup> Kraus 166. “Der Fanatiker des historischen Kostüms hofft, daß es ihm wenigstens gelingen werde, in einer Wallenstein-Gruppe darzustellen, wie man die Bevölkerung um ein Spektakel betrügt.”



Nun kommt also der Triumphzug der Kriecherei zustande...Aber die Kriecherei hatte mit Überhebung gedroht, wenn man sie nicht kriechen ließe, und Kaisertreue und Volkswirtschaft waren ausgesteckt, um zu erreichen, was den exekutiv verehrenden Patrioten auf dem Herzen lag, weil es ihnen noch nicht auf der Brust lag. Kaisertreue und Volkswirtschaft: *Gott erhalte das Kleingewerbe!*<sup>8</sup>

This passage, with its invocations of *Kaisertreue* and *Volkswirtschaft*, not only echoes the rhetoric of the *Kronprinzenwerk*, but it also reflects a centuries-old tradition of imperial pageantry in the Habsburg context – the “triumphal procession” (*Triumphzug*). Playing with grand connotations of the “triumphal procession” and its historically significant renderings by the most sought-after contemporary artists, Kraus situates the 1908 parade in the same continuing imperial tradition as Emperor Maximilian I’s impressive “parade in print,” executed by Albrecht Altdorfer, Hans Burgkmair and Albrecht Dürer in 1516-1518, as well as the more immediate Golden Jubilee for Franz Joseph that had been designed by Hans Makart as both a print project and live spectacle in 1898. Kraus, however, taints the majestic aesthetic of this genre quite frankly by naming the 1908 procession as one of sycophancy (*Kriecherei*). He reveals further that notions of loyalty to the imperial state and the national economy were unplugged to reveal the true yet not fully realized goal of the patriots behind the event’s execution – the divine preservation of small trade (*Kleingewerbe*). This final statement resonates significantly with both the *Kronprinzenwerk*’s emphasis on developing the unique economies of the crown lands and with Alois Riegl’s proposal to turn the production of traditional folk arts into financially viable cottage industries in order to advance aesthetic taste in Austria’s urban centers. The Jubilee’s perceived emphasis on trade implies that its organizers hope that the “Parade of Nations” will exhibit the industrialization of artisanal enterprise, thereby articulating the prospects of cultural and economic strength for the imperial future.

In his response to the actual Jubilee, Karl Kraus concentrates heavily on the notions of cultural authenticity, presented in the “Parade of Nations” rather than the patriotic examples offered in the historical procession. On June 19, the week following the Jubilee parade, Kraus publishes his observations on the event in a piece entitled “Nachträgliche Vorurteile gegen den Festzug.” The title suggests the increased prejudice that resulted from the parade itself (as opposed to Kraus’s anticipatory visions of it), prejudice that virtually negated the image of increased harmony, which the Jubilee organizers had intended to showcase in this stylized spectacle of a flourishing multithnic state. In the following passage, Kraus recalls his initial experience of the day:

Ich habe von Allem bloß die ‘Iglauer Sprachinsel’ gesehen. Das kam so. Ich war mittags aufgestanden, um in meine Druckerei zu gehen. Bei der Aspernbrücke konnte ich nicht vorwärtskommen, die Menschen riefen Heil! Und ich sah einen Wagen, auf dem zwei Ammen saßen. Sie hatten Gesichter, bei deren Anblick ich mir die grauenvolle Möglichkeit vorstellte, daß ich Kinder hätte und daß sie in den Anfängen ihres Lebens unaufhörlich zu solchen physiognomischen Vorbildern emporblicken müßten. Nichts mehr davon! Im Weggehen sah ich Männer herankommen, die wetterhart

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<sup>8</sup> My emphasis. Karl Kraus, “Der Festzug,” *Die Fackel* 10, no. 256 (1908) 1.

waren, aber nicht schön. Ich dachte mir, daß selten etwas Besseres nachkommt, und ging lieber weiter. *Wenn aber die österreichischen Nationalitäten so aussehen, wie die Proben, die uns noch heute auf den Wiener Straßen die Passage sperren, dann, glaube ich, könnte der Einheitsgedanke der Häßlichkeit zu einer Verständigung führen.*<sup>9</sup>

The “Iglauer Sprachinsel” that Kraus sees is significant for the way the writer views himself and his relationship to the provinces. This group from the Czech lands in present-day Jihlava would have been familiar to Kraus, who had grown up not too far away from these communities in his native Moravia.<sup>10</sup> The unexpected appearance of this contingent in the urban capital interrupts Kraus’s daily printing schedule for *Die Fackel* at his office. He runs into the Iglau visitors at the Aspern Bridge, which is just where the “Parade of Nations” crossed into the first district from the Prater, the point at which the parade left the amusement park and approached the imperial grandeur of the Ringstraße. The faces of two wet nurses cause Kraus immediately to consider the potential consequences of the infiltration of Viennese life by these provincials. Merely looking at them sends him into a state of panic over how their physical presence might affect small children of his own. He imagines the terrible possibility that these children, should he ever have them, would be forced from the earliest stages of their lives to look up at such physiognomically curious role models. Also essential to Kraus’s conception of these figures is that they would be responsible for nourishing Viennese children on the most basic of levels. He implies that their ugliness must not continue to exist in the city, a sentiment that can also be referred to the question of assimilation, which Kraus and others (mostly Jewish) faced when they arrived in Vienna from the provinces. As he leaves the scene, Kraus sees a group of weather-beaten men whose “unhandsome” (*nicht schön*) looks also offend his aesthetic sensibility. Just moments before it even begins, the parade fails to present a convincing image of the cultural unity of the Habsburg lands.

Kraus’s closing thoughts about the visitors from the “Iglauer Sprachinsel” recall the notion of “beauty” that was a unifying principle in the applied arts movement, particularly in terms of how Wiener Werkstätte designers chose to market their products as enhancing the lives of the modern consumer. A few decades earlier, imperial authorities had also utilized attractive objects of both a functional and aesthetic nature as a unifying principle with which to assemble the Habsburg-sponsored applied arts program. Despite the fact that the parade intended to showcase the trademarked beauty of the Viennese applied arts movement (and the actual execution of the historical parade could very well have succeeded in doing so), Kraus suggests that this beauty failed to shine through in the “Parade of Nations” designed by applied artists in the crown lands. Even so, Kraus goes on to concede that the ugly and unclean appearances of those from the provinces did prove to be picturesque en masse, perhaps because the lively movement within the parade blurred the details and left behind impressionistic flashes of color: “Was jedoch einzelnen häßlich und unsauber ist, kann gewiß in der Masse malerisch wirken...[i]m ethnographischen wie im historischen Teil eines Festzuges...Das ‘Malerische’ wirkt nicht wegen, sondern trotz

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<sup>9</sup> My emphasis. Karl Kraus, “Nachträgliche Vorurteile gegen den Festzug,” *Die Fackel* 10, no. 257-58 (1908) 1.

<sup>10</sup> One of the better known members of the German-speaking community in Jihlava was Dr. Julius Tandler, a leading physician and politician of the Red Vienna period.

der Echtheit.”<sup>11</sup> For Kraus, the backward manifestations of those coming from the crown lands are not due to the designs they are wearing, but instead are a result of their physical traits. Despite the hideous inclinations of such peoples, the spectacle of the Jubilee has succeeded in depicting a quaint panorama of the monarchy’s subjects. He does, of course, qualify his surprise by arguing that there is nothing aesthetically pleasing about the individuals performing in either the ethnographic “Parade of Nations” or the historical procession. Here Kraus’s cynicism contrasts directly with Berta Zuckerkandl’s stunning notions of Polish modernism as well as her enthusiastic espousal of folk art production in the crown lands. Unlike Kraus, however, Zuckerkandl focuses her writings exclusively on matters of design, as the art critic is far more interested in aesthetic objects than she is on the inherent ethnic qualities and physical appearances of those producing them. In reality, it is quite likely that the general public would have been drawn to the displays of folk art traditions that so distressed Kraus.

As “Nachträgliche Vorurteile” progresses, Kraus refers specifically to a number of key ethnic groups who have come from the provinces to participate in the Jubilee parade; the common thread that intertwines his references to these groups is that they are totally out of place in Vienna, from their specially designed ethnic costumes to their faces and most basic living habits. The stylistic and temporal discrepancies between the two sections of the parade are so obvious that Kraus derives the following lesson from the spectacle: “Die Lehre: In historischen Zeiten trug man also schöne Kostüme, und die Huzulen tragen keinen Frack.”<sup>12</sup> According to Kraus, the historical costumes are beautiful, whereas the contemporary Hutsuls still do not wear proper tails. He then pans out in order to present a chaotic picture of Austria’s ethnic groups arrayed bizarrely around the Ringstraße and questions even their temporary presence in the imperial capital:

Warum gehen die Männer mit roten Gewändern und die Männer mit Dolchen im Bauch, die auf der Straße die Kinder schrecken, und die grangebeugten Männer, die Ovationen darbringen, warum gehen sie noch immer in Wien herum? Wir sind ja endlich davon überzeugt, daß sie mit uns einem und demselben Staatsverband angehören.<sup>13</sup>

Men dressed in the bright red of folk costumes and carrying daggers around their waists frighten children on the streets, and Kraus asks why both they and the grief-stricken men who salute them are still walking around the city. Here the writer addresses the stark visual disparity and underlying tension between the urban populace and those from the crown lands, although he proclaims at the same time the parade has finally convinced the Viennese that they do indeed belong in the same federation as these conspicuous characters. Given that these visitors and their traditional ways instill terror in children and frustrate the modern sensibilities of Kraus and his contemporaries, the cultural obstacles faced by a Habsburg state wishing to display its supranational unity appear insurmountable to any reasonable observer.

Kraus continues to plumb further the ethnic tensions of Austria that the Jubilee festivities expose. While he begins his response by focusing on the visual incongruities

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<sup>11</sup> Kraus, “Nachträgliche Vorurteile gegen den Festzug” 1.

<sup>12</sup> Kraus, “Nachträgliche Vorurteile gegen den Festzug” 3.

<sup>13</sup> Kraus, “Nachträgliche Vorurteile gegen den Festzug” 6-7.

within the spectacle, the essay soon moves beyond outward appearances and becomes more somber in tone, as Kraus tackles the inhumane treatment of those from the provinces by the Viennese. He recognizes that the planning committee had intended for the parade to resolve the conflicts among Austria's nationalities; in its failure to do so, the parade has disappointed the expectations of the public and revealed instead the horrifyingly low standing of ethnic groups within the hierarchy of the empire. The following account provides a striking contrast to the colorful and highly aestheticized celebratory images of the "Parade of Nations" that appeared in the graphic works of art that advertised and commemorated the parade:

Das Exekutivkomitee hat insofern die Erwartungen enttäuscht, als es das österreichische Nationalitätenproblem tatsächlich nicht gelöst hat. Vor dem Komiteelokal demonstrierten die Dalmatiner, weil sie mit den Schlafplätzen unzufrieden waren, die Ruthenen, weil sie überhaupt keine Schlafplätze hatten, und die Kroaten wollten nicht mitspielen, weil sie in der Festschrift durch eine Erinnerung an das Jahr 48 beleidigt wurden. Die Tschechen und die Italiener hatten von allem Anfang nicht mitgetan und hätten erforderlichen Falles darum gestritten, wer zuerst nicht mittun würde. Der Stiefvater der Völker Österreichs, Herr Klotzberg, unterwarf sich in Demut und versprach – in einem Deutsch, das den kroatischen Ansprüchen vollauf entgegenkam – eine Neuauflage der Festschrift; aber für das leibliche Wohl der Nationen hatte er nicht gesorgt. Die vierhundert Ruthenen sind in der Nacht vor dem großen Tag tatsächlich erfroren und verhungert. Daß sie dann dennoch im Festzug waren, ist nur ein Beweis der belebenden Wirkung des Patriotismus.<sup>14</sup>

The "Herr Klotzberg" to whom Kraus refers is Emmerich Klotzberg (1843-1923), member of the Vienna City Council and President of the Austrian Tourist Club at the time of the Jubilee. Klotzberg also wrote the descriptions of the visiting ethnic groups that appeared in the Jubilee program. The questionable perspective from which he wrote these descriptions led Kraus to call him "the stepfather of Austria's peoples," citing the Croatian complaints against his description of their activity during the 1848 revolutions as an example of his ineptitude. Klotzberg promised humbly to print a revised version of the program, yet he failed indeed to provide for the physical well-being of the visiting nations. The discrepancy between the treatment of those from the crown lands as it was described in print and as it occurred in real life was striking, and it demonstrated unambiguously that the Viennese hosts did not think of the visiting participants in the Jubilee as their brothers in mankind; arguably this attitude was an accurate reflection of imperialistic relationship that obtained between Austria and her crown lands. The fact that such a massive number of visitors nevertheless participated in the parade after freezing and starving through the night before, was in Kraus's words, "but one proof of the animating effect of patriotism."

Kraus proceeds to address the appalling lack of concern on the part of the Viennese by pointing out dramatic headlines in the press that should have exposed the dreadful living conditions that the parade committee had arranged for the visitors:

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<sup>14</sup> Kraus, "Nachträgliche Vorurteile gegen den Festzug" 7-8.

In den Tagen der Feste las man einen großen Lokalbericht, der diese Aufschriften trug: ‘Der Schauplatz des Unglücks,’ ‘Die Rettungsaktion,’ ‘Die Bergung der ersten Toten,’ ‘Die Opfer,’ ‘Die Leichenschau,’ ‘Die Liste der Toten,’ ‘Die Liste der Verletzten,’ ‘Der Bericht an den Magistrat,’ ‘Was die Geretteten erzählen.’ Ein Bericht über den Festzug wars also nicht; bloß der über die Explosionskatastrophe in Ottakring. Aber zu dergleichen Lappalien hatte man in Wien jetzt keine Zeit. Auch unwichtige Details, die wirklich den Festzug betrafen, wurden übersehen. Zum Beispiel:

‘Mehr als 400 Bauern aus Ostgalizien sind heute Mittags angekommen, aber das Komitee, das sie hieher bestellt hatt, gab ihnen nichts zu essen und wollte, daß sie ihn im Prater auf dem nackten Erdboden schlafen. Sonntag abends kamen sie in Lemberg an, wo sie eine Probe hatten. Dienstag Nachmittags fuhren sie von dort weg in einem Bummelzug, in dem sie ihre Notdurft durch die Fenster verrichten mußten. Gestern nach 1 Uhr kamen sie in Wien an. Sie wurden in den Prater gebracht, wo sie hinter der Rennbahn in Zelten untergebracht werden sollten. Sie mußten bis nach 5 Uhr warten, ehe sie etwas zu essen bekamen. Was sie aber dann bekamen, war so, daß 70 Bauern das Essen überhaupt zurückwiesen, weil es ihnen, die wirklich nicht an allzu gute Küche gewöhnt sind, zu schlecht sind, zu schlecht war. Das Mittagmahl bestand aus einer dünnen Suppe, einem kleinen Stückchen harten Fleisches, einer Kartoffel und einem Stückchen Brot. Das Fleisch war zu hart, das Brot zu wenig. Auch diejenigen, die das Essen genommen hatten, klagten, daß sie hungrig geblieben seien. Noch skandalöser als das Essen war das Quartier. Etwa 20 Zelten waren errichtet und in jedem sollten 25 bis 30 Personen schlafen. Um 9 Uhr Abends war bloß in einigen Zelten ein Strohsack, in den meisten war gar nichts, nicht einmal Stroh, auf das sich die Festgäste hätten legen können, auch nicht Decken, mit denen sie sich gegen die Kälte schützen konnten. Man mutete ihnen allen Ernstes zu, in dieser kalten Nacht auf dem nackten Boden zu schlafen. Es ist kein Wunder, daß die Leute drohten, die Zelte zusammenzuschlagen.’

Aber am andern Morgen ging’s hoch her.<sup>15</sup>

Kraus comments ironically that newspaper journalists could have very well used titles such as “The Stage of Sorrow” and “The Exhibition of Corpses” to introduce the dire effects of an arduous journey and poor accommodation on the spectacle’s participants. Instead an explosion in Ottakring dominates the headlines. When journalists reported on the provincial presence in Vienna, they failed to connect minor details about the visitors with the larger implications of the impending Jubilee parade, which was, of course, the sole reason for their visit to the imperial capital. After citing statistics on the ghastly food and quarters for the monarchy’s peasants in the Prater, Kraus is quick to point out that despite the horrific conditions overnight, the lively celebration kicked off the next morning. The shocking contrast between the mistreatment of the provincials upon their arrival and the energy they were expected to pour into their performances on the stage of the Ringstraße underscores the great disparity in assumptions about the Habsburg *Vielvölkerstaat*. The Viennese organizers of the Jubilee treated these people like animals at night and then expected them to perform enthusiastically for the benefit of the imperial state the next

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<sup>15</sup> Kraus, “Nachträgliche Vorurteile gegen den Festzug” 8-9.

morning. It is, as Kraus transcribes the report above, no wonder then that the visitors threatened to destroy their tents and the spectacle ultimately showcased the irreconcilable tensions between the urban and provincial spheres of Habsburg influence on the aesthetic, linguistic and most basic human levels. Just as Austrian authorities failed in their attempts to eradicate the cultural incongruities within the monarchy in any meaningful way, so the Jubilee organizers failed to gloss them over in the parade. The response of those represented the “Parade of Nations” to the treatment they received at the hands of the Viennese, and their distinctive physical appearance, did little to dispel Viennese prejudices that Kraus alludes to in the title of this piece.

He concludes his summary of the Jubilee with a fantastic and politically charged portrait of the day’s end:

Jubel ohne Ende. Dem Festzug folgte ein Nationalitätenfest in der Rotunde, bei dem die Komiteemitglieder vom Publikum beschimpft wurden, die Schlesier und Galizianer zwangsweise tanzten und die Triestiner die Irredentisten prügeln. Hier fanden sich endlich auch die lange gesuchten Taschendiebe ein, die beim Festzug gefehlt hatten, und die jetzt unter allgemeinem Beifall verhaftet wurden. Sie hatten den Zuschauern weniger abgenommen und mehr geboten als die Komiteemitglieder.<sup>16</sup>

The day had brought forth jubilation without end; following the parade there was a celebration of the nationalities in the Rotunda that produced blatant displays of the convulated power dynamics that are suffocating the Habsburg state. The public swore at the members of the parade planning committee, the Silesians and Galicians danced under duress, and the Triestines beat up the irredentists. Kraus’s scene demonstrates that the Jubilee has succeeded in encapsulating a number of contemporary issues plaguing both the imperial capital and the provinces. The Viennese public is fed up with the months of planning that have culminated in a final spectacle not worth the financial burden it has placed on the city, while some of the more “exotic” participants from the crown lands have been obliged to perform against their will, all in the name of the Jubilee. The irredentists Kraus mentions are players in the exact sense of the word. *Italia irredenta* was the contemporary Italian pan-nationalist movement that sought the union of Habsburg Istria with the newly unified Kingdom of Italy. Allusions to irredentism on the occasion of the Jubilee would have conjured especially disturbing memories because the irredentist Guglielmo Oberdan had attempted to assassinate Emperor Franz Joseph on his 1882 visit to Trieste, commemorating five hundred years of Habsburg rule in the port city. The image of Triestines battering members of this nationalist group in an effort to suppress them politically and physically demonstrates the degree to which imperial administrators in the crown land exerted control over the local population. Petty criminals also make an appearance at this after-parade party, even though they had not been featured in the spectacle itself. Their arrest, greeted by general applause, seems to be the sole moment that unifies the peoples of Austria at the gathering. For Kraus, however, the members of the planning committee remain the true criminals; the pickpockets have at least taken less from

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<sup>16</sup> Kraus, “Nachträgliche Vorurteile gegen den Festzug” 9.

the parade spectators and offered them more than the bureaucratic minds organizers of the Jubilee.<sup>17</sup>

The focus of Kraus's musings at the close of the Jubilee year in December 1908 shifts from those of his sarcastic spring columns about the planning for the big parade. Instead of reminiscing about the parade, Kraus turns to the spectacular night of illumination that *Die Neue Freie Presse* had not been able to cover extensively because of the outbreaks of ethnic violence in Prague and the Balkan states. The closing of the Jubilee with the Illumination provides occasion to reflect upon the role that pure ornamentation played in celebrating Franz Joseph over the course of the year.

"Jubilation and Misery"<sup>18</sup> opens with the invocation, "Lord, deliver us from our distress and make our jubilation come to an end! cried the Austrian at the end of 1908, and sank into the sluggard's bed of history."<sup>19</sup> Kraus then addresses the year itself, "Oh year of dreams, oh day of awakening!"<sup>20</sup> The year 1908 has been marked by pathetic, embarrassing events, by dreams and then finally by an abrupt awakening. An extravagant amount of effort and resources have been invested to no avail: "It is tough. If one could put into a solitary smoked herring the quantities of sweat, loyalty and other excrement that this year has produced between Preßburg and Passau, Heaven itself would have to show some understanding and award [it] all the decorations of the Milky Way!"<sup>21</sup> The universe's decorations are much more appealing than the earthly ones created by the parade's designers, which were little more than a dense bundle of wasted creative energy and financial resources. Moreover, the geographical scope of this remark, between Bratislava (Pressburg) in present-day Slovakia and Passau in present-day Germany, is relatively provincial and "German" in character, a commentary that declines to convey the vastness of the Habsburg Empire as well as the massive and diverse participation in the Jubilee parade.

Kraus addresses the Illumination of December 1, 1908, more directly emphasizing that it was a complete failure:

Possessions and Blood! So it resounded for an entire year in Austria.<sup>22</sup> The possessions had to be sued before the commercial court, and the blood was shed on the Ringstraße, when they came up with the idea of lighting up the night of a country with gas lamps. The spectacle will remain unforgettable to all observers. For in order to see how, on the evening of December 1,

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<sup>17</sup> Kraus's inclusion of pickpockets in his narrative of the parade bears interesting parallels to Hitler's account of the parade, as cited by Brigitte Hamann in *Hitler's Vienna* (147). According to Hamann's sources, the dictator's only written reference to the Jubilee focuses on the numbers of large pickpockets roaming the streets of Vienna.

<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, an English translation of the title does not do justice to Kraus's wonderful alliteration of "Jubel und Jammer."

<sup>19</sup> Kraus 171. "Herr, erlöse uns von unserer Not und mache unserm Jubel ein Ende!, rief der Österreicher am Ausgang des Jahres 1908 und sank ermattet in das Faulbett der Geschichte."

<sup>20</sup> Kraus 171. "O Jahr der Träume, o Tag des Erwachens!"

<sup>21</sup> Kraus 172. "Es ist hart. Könnte man die Mengen von Schweiß, Loyalität und sonstigen Ausscheidungen, die dieses Jahr zwischen Preßburg und Passau ergeben hat, in einem einzigen Bücklung aufwenden, der Himmel selbst müßte ein Einsehn haben und all Dekorationen der Milchstraße verleihen!"

<sup>22</sup> Kraus takes this cry of "Gut und Blut!" from the 1854-1918 version of the imperial Austrian anthem, with music by Joseph Haydn and lyrics by Johann Gabriel Seil. The song's second verse proclaims, "Gut und Blut für unsern Kaiser, Gut und Blut fürs Vaterland!"

Vienna was once again respectably illuminated for the first time in a decade, one and a half million people marched out. Due to insufficient street lighting, just as many stayed at home, and consequently no accident happened on the streets.<sup>23</sup>

Kraus mocks this feeble attempt at another large-scale Jubilee celebration; its poor conception has led to poor attendance, which in turn demonstrated that by this point in the year, Austrians had lost interest in celebrating sixty years of the Emperor's reign, even though December 1 the exact anniversary of his coronation.

After a lengthy discussion of the humorous aspects of the Jubilee, particularly the wasted energy that has gone into its organization, Kraus comments on its pernicious effect on the residents of Vienna:

Nothing surpasses the image of an orderly family that was evident even in the chaos of the thronging masses: father – dead, mother – nerve shock, son – knee injury, daughter – skin irritation. “So long, children” spoke a life-weary Viennese man to his family, “I’m gonna go jubilate!” The motive is unknown. The police report only mentioned the feeble and remained silent [about the fact] that among the dead of this day of jubilation there were also suicides...<sup>24</sup>

The celebration is so revolting that not only do entire families fall victim to the frenzied atmosphere, but weary individuals commit suicide simply by partaking in the spectacle, a matter the authorities would happily overlook. Kraus concludes this piece by commenting on the serious historical repercussions of the 1908 Jubilee: “Humor has, however, lost consciousness in the crush of people. Then with trembling fists it fends off the scandal that roars around the peace of an era. He casts a glance backward at Austria’s future and prays: Lord, make an end to our jubilation!”<sup>25</sup> The Jubilee has made it apparent that a peaceful chapter of Austrian history will soon be over. Kraus’s criticism suggests that this imminent downfall has been a long time in the making; but it is only through the failure of such celebratory gestures as the Paade and Illumination that the trajectory of Austria’s decline becomes clearly evident and a topic for open discussion throughout Austria-Hungary.

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<sup>23</sup> Kraus 173. “Gut und Blut! Erscholl es ein Jahr lang in Österreich. Das Gut mußte vor dem Handelsgericht eingeklagt werden, und das Blut wurde auf der Ringstraße vergossen, als sie auf den Einfall kamen, die Nacht eines Landes durch Lampions zu erhellen. Das Schauspiel wird allen Betrachtern unvergeßlich bleiben. Denn um zu sehen, wie am Abend des 1. Dezember Wien seit zehn Jahren wieder einmal anständig beleuchtet war, rückten anderthalb Millionen Menschen aus. Bei ungenügender Straßenbeleuchtung bleiben ebensoviele in den Häusern, und infolgedessen geschieht auf der Straße kein Unglück.”

<sup>24</sup> Kraus 174. “Und nichts geht über das Bild eines geordneten Familienlebens, das selbst noch im Chaos der drängenden Massen anschaulich wurde: Vater – tot, Mutter – Nervenschok, Sohn – Quetschung des Kniegelenks, Tochter – Hautabschürfung. “Pfüat enk Gott, Kinder” sagte ein lebensmüder Wiener zu den Seinen, “I geh jubilieren!” Das Motiv ist unbekannt. Der Polizeibericht aber gedachte nur der Bresthaften und verschwie, daß unter den Toten dieses Jubeltags auch Selbstmörder waren...”

<sup>25</sup> Kraus 174. “Der Humor aber ist im Gedränge ohnmächtig geworden. Dann wehrt er mit zitternden Fäusten die Schmach ab, die den Frieden eines Alters umbrüllt. Er wirft einen Rückblick in Österreichs Zukunft und fleht: Herr, mach unserm Jubel ein Ende!”



## Adolf Loos and the Failure of Imperial Design

*Ich aber frage: brauchen wir den angewandten künstler? Nein.*

- Adolf Loos, “Die Überflüssigen” (1908)

Born into a family of Brno stonemasons and trained as a haberdasher, the architect Adolf Loos (1870-1933) was from an early age no stranger to the consequences of Austro-Hungarian industrialism and the imperial promotion of the applied arts. After attending the imperial schools of Arts and Crafts in Liberec and Brno, Loos studied briefly in Dresden and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna; he then worked for several years as a mason in the United States, spending formative time in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and St. Louis at just the time when modernist architecture was making its first appearance in these American cities. This stay in North America, followed by significant travels through the industrial centers of Great Britain, informed Loos’s own modernist aesthetic in a profound way, as is evident in the prime examples of his earlier architectural works in Vienna – the American Bar off Kärntnerstraße (1908) and the Goldman and Salatsch building on Michaelerplatz (1910). During the year 1908, Loos wrote a number of polemical essays in which he questions the need for applied arts in a modern state; the most famous of these is “Ornament and Crime.” The Jubilee festivities that had precipitated such a visceral response from his close friend Karl Kraus<sup>26</sup> caused Loos to think of cultural degeneration. While Kraus focused most of his criticism on the ethnic aspects of the parade (both Viennese and provincial), Loos found fault in the superfluous ornament plaguing the city in 1908, both in the *Kunstschau* and in the parade. To get a full sense of Loos’s famous critique of ornament and of what he considered to be its frivolous utilization by the Wiener Werkstätte<sup>27</sup> and its dangerously naïve misappropriation by the Austrian state, one must consider his 1908 essays in conjunction with his later pieces “Heimatkunst” (1914) and “Richtlinien für ein Kunstamt” (1919).

His understudied career as a writer began with a commission from *Die Neue Freie Presse* to write weekly essays on the 1898 Jubilee exhibition, a largely Historicist event that took place between May and October of that year in the Prater Rotunda erected originally for the 1873 World Exhibition.<sup>28</sup> The exhibition focused on cutting-edge industrial developments in Austria, including cars built by members the Austrian Automobile Club and an entirely electrical lighting system. It also marked the introduction of *Jugendstil*-inspired fashion, furniture and architecture such prominent figures as Otto Wagner, Heinrich Lefler and Joseph Urban (who would go on to become the chief architect of the 1908 Jubilee). In the French foreword to the first volume of his collected works, *Ins Leere gesprochen, 1897-1900*, Loos foregrounds the frustration he experienced

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<sup>26</sup> At Loos’s grave, Kraus named him the “Befreier des Lebens aus der Sklaverei der Mittel.” See Karl Kraus, *Die Fackel* 888 (1933).

<sup>27</sup> Loos’s critique of the Wiener Werkstätte enterprise is evident in a number of essays written by Loos throughout his career, from his early attacks on its founder Josef Hoffmann in 1897 to his description of “Das Wiener Weh” in *Die Neue Freie Presse* on April 21, 1927.

<sup>28</sup> A fire destroyed the Rotunda in 1937.

in writing these 1898 essays, which he claims not to have expressed his true opinion “for pedagogical reasons”:

Dieser brief hat seine vorgeschichte. Ich hatte ursprünglich während meiner mitarbeit bei der “Neuen Freien Presse” die absicht gehabt, diese aufsätze, die jeden sonntag während der dauer der Jubiläums-Ausstellung im jahre 1898 in diesem blatte erschienen sind, als buch im verlage der “Dekorativen Kunst,” München, Verlag Bruckmann, erscheinen zu lassen...Im laufe der jahre machten mir viele deutsche verleger den antrag, diese artikel erschienen zu lassen. Aber ich war dagegen. Diese aufsätze waren zu einer zeit und in einem blatte geschrieben, wo ich tausend rücksichten zu nehmen hatte. Meine wahre meinung mußte ich aus pädagogischen gründen in sätze fassen, die mir nach jahren beim lesen nervenschmerzen verursachten.<sup>29</sup>

During the next imperial Jubilee, Loos would react strongly against the intellectual and creative restraints he found himself under in 1898. Writing for an imperially defined context, however, required the architect to consider carefully the political potential of aesthetic enterprises, particularly with regard to the emerging applied arts movement.

Although the 1898 exhibition focused exclusively on art and industry, it did so in a very technical manner, concerned not so much with the cultural phenomena guiding these trends, but rather with exemplifying the industrial achievements primarily of German-speaking Austria. Imperial motivations guided the organization of the 1898 Jubilee exhibition in an obvious way, but the show did not include major contributions from the crown lands or represent their diverse cultural traditions. By showcasing Vienna’s achievements as the guiding force for the greater Habsburg state, the 1898 festivities were an entirely different affair from the celebrations a decade later. In his essays for the Golden Jubilee of 1898, Loos focused his discussions on broader issues of art and industry, largely in terms of how Austrian trends compared to those in England and America (whence he had just returned). Loos had already begun to develop his characteristically vituperative tone, although at this stage he contained his criticisms to Vienna’s need to compete more actively with England in the realms high fashion (particularly men’s wear) and furniture design.

One of Loos’s essays from the inter-Jubilee period highlights his increasing dissatisfaction with the practice of political tinkering in the arts. In “Kunstförderung,” an unpublished piece from 1905, he addresses state sponsorship of modern art, an issue I have already discussed extensively in chapter 1 with reference to the writings of the Secessionists and Berta Zuckerandl.<sup>30</sup> The architect explains that it is not that the state does too little for art, but in fact that it does too much. He writes, “Die Sorge um die Kunst ist nicht Sache des Staates. Die Sorge um die Kunst ist Sache jedes Einzelnen: Pflicht des Staates ist es, sie zur Sache jedes Einzelnen zu machen.”<sup>31</sup> Art should be a matter for each individual, and the state make art the matter of each individual. Loos argues effectively

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<sup>29</sup> Adolf Loos, *Ins Leer gesprochen, 1897-1900* (Paris: Éditions George Crès, 1921) 6.

<sup>30</sup> Loos also wrote several essays that correspond quite nicely to pieces by Berta Zuckerandl and Otto Wagner discussed in Chapter One. These include “Myrbach-Ausstellung,” “Der Fall Scala,” “Wanderungen durch die Winterausstellung” and “Epilog zur Winterausstellung.”

<sup>31</sup> Adolf Loos, *Die Potemkin’sche Stadt* 99.

against the formation of a collective identity through imperial sponsorship of the arts and for a system that promotes independent styles and voices. He contends further that such patronage hinders the creative process on behalf of the individual, to the point of the unnecessary bullying of all art:

Die Erkenntnis, daß der Staat nicht dazu imstande ist, der Kunst zu nützen, sondern nur dazu, das Genie zu hindern, muß Wurzel fassen unter den Menschen. Dann wird der Staat mit Freuden die ihm aufgezwungene Rolle des angeblichen Kunstförderers aufgeben. Aber *gedrängt* muß er dazu werden.<sup>32</sup>

While Loos recognizes the needs of the individual genius, he also calls for a collective spirit to pressure the state into giving up its control over the artistic process. Although he uses the passive voice to describe this course of action and does not assign a specific agent, Loos's rhetoric seems to call for a mass uprising of individuals against the imperial government in the matter of art.

"Ornament and Crime" is by far Loos's most cited work, yet so far scholarly treatments of it have preferred to focus on its future meaning for the minimalist aesthetic of the Bauhaus movement, failing largely to consider the complicated cultural context that inspired the architect to write it. This context includes the 1908 Jubilee, which for Loos proved to be highly symptomatic of the damaging effects of ornament on the modern political state. Although Loos wrote the piece 1908, he first presented the material at a public lecture in Vienna in 1910, and it appeared first in print, in French translation, in the June 1913 issue of the journal *Les Cahiers d'Aujourd'hui*. In the essay, the architect equates modern usage of ornament with criminality. He begins with the example of the Papuan, whom he claims to be just as amoral as a small child. Although, in Loos's imagination at least, the Papuan slaughters his human enemies and then proceeds to cannibalize them, he does not consider him to be a criminal. If the modern man, however, were to engage in such practices, he would without a doubt, in Loos's view, be a criminal or degenerate. The Papuan also tattoos his skin, his boot, his oars, anything that is within his reach; Loos contends that any tattooed man from a developed culture who is not already in prison is either a latent criminal or a degenerate aristocrat. The Papuan's drive to decorate his face and all his possessions denotes the very beginnings of the visual arts and is "the baby's gurgle of painting." Loos clearly defines his mission in the following statement: "Ich habe folgende erkenntnis gefunden und der welt geschenkt: *evolution der kultur ist gleichbedeutend mit dem entfernen des ornamentes aus dem gebrauchsgegenstande.*"<sup>33</sup> This argument is clearly connected to *fin-de-siècle* discourses of primitivism, although Loos adamantly situates these issues in his present time and place. The Papuan's obsession with ornament does not concern Loos; he rather aims the critique of "Ornament and Crime" at the primitive and degenerate elements in his own world of Vienna in 1908.

In Loos's genealogy of ornament, he states that it is natural for the primitive Papuan or for a child to be drawn towards decoration, but that one can measure the degree of progress in a given culture according to the degree to which it excludes decoration. He

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<sup>32</sup> Loos, *Die Potemkin'sche Stadt* 101.

<sup>33</sup> Adolf Loos, *Trotzdem* (Innsbruck: Brenner Verlag, 1931) 79-82

suggests that by the late nineteenth century, there is no longer a need for modern man to be slave to centuries-old practices that have now been exhausted, although the state, Austria especially, has ensured that this aesthetic will live on: “[D]er staat, dessen aufgabe es ist, die völker in ihrer kulturellen entwicklung aufzuhalten, machte die frage nach der entwicklung und wiederaufnahme des ornamentes zu der seinen. Wehe dem staate, dessen revolutionen die hofräte besorgen!” (82). As the Habsburg bureaucracy worked to guide the lifestyles of the monarchy’s peoples, it established a program of modern design in the name of ornamental and therefore cultural and economic progress. The paradox of this program was that the aesthetic was in a sense “modern” while the political structures remained resolutely hierarchical. In Loos’s view it was actually the objective of the state to retard the cultural development of its peoples. This may in part explain his aim to reveal the true aesthetic of modern man, one that does not rely upon antiquated methods of ornamentation and imperial patronage to touch the lives of common subjects. His objective is at once aesthetic and political.

Loos names the Museum of Applied Arts as the main culprit in perpetuating this falsely democratic visual ideology:

Bald sah man im wiener kunstgewerbemuseum ein büffet, das ‘der reiche fischzug’ hieß, bald gab es schränke, die den namen ‘die verwunschene prinzessin’ oder einen ähnlichen trugen, der sich auf das ornament bezog, mit welchem diese unglücksmöbel bedeckt waren. Der österreichische staat nimmt seine aufgabe so genau, daß er dafür sorgt, daß die fußlappen aus den grenzen der österreichisch-ungarischen monarchie nicht verschwinden. Er zwingt jeden kultivierten mann drei jahre lang an stelle der gewirkten fußbekleidung fußlappen zu tragen. Denn schließlich geht eben jeder staat von der voraussetzung aus, daß ein niedrig stehendes volk leichter zu regieren ist.<sup>34</sup>

The naming of furniture pieces from the Museum of Applied Arts according to their surface decorations refers to the practices of marketing such fashionable objects from the Biedermeier period onward. In the case of the museum, Loos does not place the blame on the furniture designers themselves, but he attacks instead the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy for having such a strict agenda. Here Loos sums up the very intention behind imperial sponsorship of the applied arts; heavy ornamentation is synonymous with an imperial style, which is then transferred to functional objects for a modern consumer that would want to participate in this styling of everyday life. The state also controls the most basic clothing needs; when cultivated young men reach the age of twenty and fulfill their military service, for the next three years the state requires them to wear foot rags instead of modern, manufactured footwear at the Empire’s borders. Not only does the state control the production of objects that end up in museums and in the living rooms of the bourgeoisie, but it dictates the footwear of the future generations. Loos sketches an Austrian state that has inflicted prescriptive styles on its peoples at all levels and within all realms, a state strategy predicated on the the assumption, he notes, that it is far easier to rule those on a lower footing. By institutionalizing a preference for functional ornament, the Austrian state

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<sup>34</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 82-83.

has created a population of degenerates, a notion that manifested itself to a shocking degree in the Jubilee parade.

Loos asserts further that the “epidemic of ornament” is both recognized and supported by the state. The monarchy wants its subjects to believe that ornament can only heighten the joy of the sophisticate, and instructors at the School of Applied Arts perpetuate this mindset and produce the designs that nourish it.

Nun gut, die ornament-seuche ist staatlich anerkannt und wird mit staatsgeldern subventioniert. Ich aber erblicke darin einen rückschritt. Ich lasse den einwand nicht gelten, daß das ornament die lebensfreude eines kultivierten menschen erhöht. . .Mir und mit mir allen kultivierten menschen erhöht das ornament die lebensfreude nicht. Wenn ich ein stück pfefferkuchen essen will, so wähle ich mir eines, das ganz glatt ist und nicht ein stück, das ein herz oder ein wickelkind oder einen reiter darstellt, der über und über mit ornamenten bedeckt ist. . .Der vertreter des ornamentes glaubt, daß mein drang nach einfachheit einer kasteiung gleichkommt. Nein, verehrter herr professor aus der kunstgewerbeschule, ich kasteie mich nicht! Mir schmeckt es so besser. . .Mit grauen gehe ich durch eine kochkunausstellung, wenn ich daran denke, ich sollte diese ausgestopften tierleichen essen. Ich esse roastbeef.<sup>35</sup>

According to Loos, the craze for ornament has infiltrated all sectors of life, to the extent that the simplest of baked goods exemplifies this state-sponsored lifestyle of decorative excess. By addressing directly the professor of applied arts who might accuse him of self-denial, Loos reinforces his view of the perversity of absurdly ornamental practices.

The highpoint of “Ornament and Crime,” however, Loos’s explicit reference to the Jubilee parade. He explains that the pace of a state’s cultural development suffers at the hands of stragglers, who in the case of Austria make up the majority of the monarchy’s constituents:

Ich lebe vielleicht im jahre 1908, mein nachbar aber lebt um 1900 und der dort im jahre 1880. Es ist ein unglück für einen staat, wenn sich die kultur seiner einwohner auf einen so großen zeitraum verteilt. Der kalser bauer lebt im zwölften jahrhundert. *Und im jubiläumfestzuge gingen völkerschaften mit, die selbst während der völkerwanderung als rückständig empfunden worden wären.*<sup>36</sup>

Loos claims that in Vienna itself his neighbors live anachronistically, while a peasant in Kals (East Tyrol) continues to live in the twelfth century. These discrepancies, however, converge in the Jubilee parade, where Loos observes ethnic peoples who would, he notes, have been considered backwards even during the Barbarian Invasions. Loos argues that it is a misfortune for a state when the disparate levels of cultural development among its inhabitants represent so vast an expanse of time. Combined with the highly ornamental spectacle of the Jubilee, the display of such cultural primitivism from within Austria-

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<sup>35</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 83.

<sup>36</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 84. My emphasis.

Hungary's borders can only mean, in Loos's terms, that the Habsburg Empire is saturated with aesthetic and physical degeneracy. This appraisal is strikingly similar to Kraus's disgust for the Moravian wet nurses and weather-beaten men he encounters on his way to work the morning of the parade.

Loos connects the stragglers to the politicized relationship between ornament and criminality in this statement:

Die nachzügler verlangsamten die kulturelle entwicklung der völker und der menschheit, denn das ornament wird nicht nur von verbrechern erzeugt, es begeht ein verbrechen, dadurch, daß es den menschen schwer an der gesundheit, am nationalvermögen und als in seiner kulturellen entwicklung schädigt. Wenn zwei menschen nebeneinander wohnen, die bei gleichen bedürfnissen, bei denselben ansprüchen an das leben, und demselben einkommen, verschiedenen kulturen angehören, kann man, volkswirtschaftlich betrachtet, folgenden vorgang wahrnehmen: der mann des zwanzigsten jahrhunderts wird immer reicher, der mann des achtzehnten jahrhunderts immer ärmer.<sup>37</sup>

For Loos, not only are criminals responsible for ornament, but ornament itself commits a crime in that it harms man's health and the wealth of his nation, a trajectory that results in the stunting of his cultural development. The anachronisms within Austrian society bear especially damaging consequences on the national level, as the modern man of the twentieth century becomes richer while the man of the eighteenth century can only become poorer in terms of cultural and economic development. Since the need for ornament has died out with the advent of modern culture, those that force a highly decorative style are only contributing to the downfall of the state. Loos argues that ornament is not a natural element of twentieth-century culture; its appearance indicates either backwardness or an instance of degeneration. The maker of ornament is no longer paid commensurately, and therefore ornament wastes valuable labor in addition to quality materials.

The artist-designers of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna are to blame for the misappropriation and abuse of artisanship that ultimately hinders the Austrian economy. Loos comments on the fleeting nature of their trendy products, arguing that such pieces fail to withstand the test of time and connect with the consumer on a meaningful level:

Das ornament, das heute geschaffen wird, hat keinen zusammenhang mit uns, hat überhaupt keine menschlichen zusammenhänge, keinen zusammenhang mit der weltordnung. Es ist nicht entwicklungsfähig... Der moderne ornamentiker aber ist ein nachzügler oder eine pathologische erscheinung. Seine produkte werden schon nach drei jahren von ihm selbst verleugnet. Kultivierten menschen sind sie sofort unerträglich, den anderen wird diese unerträglichkeit erst nach jahren bewußt... Wo werden die arbeiten Olbrichs nach zehn jahren sein? Das moderne ornament hat keine eltern und keine nachkommen, hat keine vergangenheit und keine zukunft.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 84-85.

<sup>38</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 86-87.

By referring specifically to the Secessionist Josef Maria Olbrich, Loos attacks the very foundation of the modern Viennese applied arts movement. He views this movement as entirely frivolous, in tune with neither mankind nor the global order and without any concern for past and future generations. Loos's harsh words, however, do not take into consideration the contemporary urgency with which the Secessionists assembled themselves against their Historicist instructors at the Academy of Fine Arts, nor does he address the distinctly functional manifest of the Wiener Werkstätte. He criticizes instead their highly decorative aesthetic and suggests that the removal of ornament would prevent functional objects from going out of style; the consumer would utilize an object according to the lifespan of its materials instead of throwing it out as soon as the market's taste in design changes. The question of taste in the imperial capital is, of course, reminiscent of Alois Riegl's call for the modern transformation of folk art a decade and a half earlier in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*. Riegl was keenly aware of the fickle tastes of the urban consumer at the turn of the century and thought carefully about the role of the Austrian state in directing these tastes in the name of cultural understanding throughout the crown lands. Loos observes that this imperial design initiative has already run its course by 1908, and he argues that the only way for Austria-Hungary to recover from the degenerative effects of ornament is for its inhabitants to adopt a clean-surfaced and cost-effective aesthetic that will construct a successfully modern lifestyle.

At the same time, however, Loos acknowledges that not all corners of the monarchy can or should adhere to an anti-ornamental lifestyle. As he has already referred to the extreme primitivism found within the imperial borders and which has presented itself publically in the Jubilee parade, he approaches the essay's conclusion with a word on his target audience and those who must not necessarily convert to his rhetoric of anti-ornament. Modern man will have already understood Loos's attack on ornament as a major sign of cultural degeneration, although there are many individuals and peoples who have not yet reached this level of sophistication:

Der moderne mensch, der das ornament als zeichen der künstlerischen überschüssigkeit vergangener epochen heilig halt, wird das gequälte, mühselig abgerungene und krankhafte der modernen ornamente sofort erkennen. Kein ornament kann heute mehr geboren werden von einem, der auf unserer kulturstufe lebt. *Anders ist es mit menschen und völkern, die diese stufe noch nicht erreicht haben.*<sup>39</sup>

Loos suggests that some ethnic groups cannot help themselves in carrying on the backwards practice of ornamentation. There are, however, those in power who ensure the maintenance of these artisanal habits, since ornamentation is the only means by which less culturally developed peoples find joy in their lives. While Loos has already discussed the ways in which the Austrian state dictates the styles of its soldiers in an effort to keep them down, he now reveals the aristocrat to be the sole figure responsible for the preservation of such craft practices, deemed sacred by certain cultures:

Ich predige den aristokraten, ich meine die menschen, die an der spitze der menschheit stehen und doch das tiefste verständnis für das drängen und die

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<sup>39</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 90. My emphasis.

not der untenstehenden haben. Den kaffer, der ornamente nach einem bestimmten rhythmus in die gewebe einwirkt, dir nur zum vorschein kommen, wenn man sie auftrennt, den perser, der seinen teppich knüpft, die slovakische bäuerin, die ihre spitze stickt, die alte dame, die wunderbare dinge in glasperlen und seide häkelt, die versteht er sehr wohl. Der aristokrat läßt sie gewähren, er weiß, daß es ihre heiligen stunden sind, in denen sie arbeiten.<sup>40</sup>

For Loos the Black African weaves ornaments according to a certain rhythm, an image that one associates immediately with notions of African tribal music and dance. The second figure of a Persian making an Oriental carpet is just as celebratory for his splendid instincts, as is the final image of an old lady who works with glittery glass beads and crochets with shiny silk. The third character of the lacemaking Slovak peasant woman, however, bears further consideration, as it is undoubtedly the imperial institutions for the applied arts that have brought her to Loos's attention. In the 1876 publication *Die kunstgewerblichen Fachschulen des k.k. Handelsministerium* (discussed in Chapter One), the art historian Albert Ilg had already recognized the outstanding lacework in the Slovak lands and called upon Slovak schools of arts and crafts to expand upon this tradition for the sake of Austro-Hungarian industrialization. The peasant woman from the eastern provinces also figured prominently in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, as Alois Riegl imagined the potential mass appeal of craftwork done by a Bukowinan peasant woman for modern Viennese tastes. Furthermore, the role of the aristocrat is significant in that members of the aristocracy, Rudolf von Eitelberger being the most prominent, were responsible for planting the seeds of the applied arts program and overseeing the very foundation of its institutions in Vienna and throughout the crown lands. Perhaps most significant in this passage, however, is that Loos places the Slovak woman in the same category of "exotics" as a Black African and a Persian (essentially on the same level as the Papuan who introduces the essay), leading one to return to his earlier discussion of anachronistic dwellers in the imperial capital of Vienna. In Loos's worldview, the Slovak peasant would be both a straggler and a naïve cultural primitive; she enjoys the status of being an imperial resident yet she belongs to a lesser evolved group, leading one to question her existence within the Austrian state given her aesthetic inclinations. Her presence is also connected to the "backwards" peoples Loos observes in the Jubilee parade, those who are more primitive in appearance than the Barbarians and therefore belong to an era a good millennium and a half before 1908. Such an era could comprise the ancient origins of a modern Slovak national state, but it is shocking to find within the borders of a "sophisticated" Austria.

Loos concludes his address to the aristocrat as follows:

Ich predige den aristokraten. Ich ertrage ornamente am eigenen körper, wenn sie die freude meiner mitmenschen ausmachen. Sie sind dann auch meine freude. Ich ertrage die ornamente des kaffern, des persers, der slovakischen bäuerin, die ornamente meines schusters, denn sie alle haben kein anderes mittel, um zu den höhepunkten ihres daseins zu kommen... Wer aber zur neunten symphonie geht und sich dann hinsetzt,

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<sup>40</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 90.



um ein tapetenmuster zu zeichnen, ist entweder ein hochstapler oder ein degenerierter.<sup>41</sup>

The architect will tolerate ornament on the human body as long as it brings joy to his fellow humans. He will also tolerate the ornaments rendered by the *kaffir*, the Persian and the Slovak peasant woman because those people have no other means with which to reach the high points of their respective existences. Loos does not suggest that these groups must remove all traces of ornament from their lives and work, as their worlds have not yet evolved culturally and economically to the point that decoration is no longer necessary. The man who finds inspiration to design wallpaper by attending Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, however, is either a fraud or a degenerate. This scenario is a clear reference to the founding Secessionist and sometimes Wiener Werkstätte collaborator Gustav Klimt, who in 1902 completed his celebrated *Beethoven Frieze* for the 14<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of the Vienna Secession. Klimt structured this massive installation around his interpretation of the Ninth Symphony, and by utilizing the frieze format, the painter situates the project within the realms of decorative art and Historicist (in this case Greek-derived) architecture. Encrusted with semi-precious stones and highlighted with gold leaf, the *Beethoven Frieze* exemplifies the exact backwards-looking, decadent trends in Vienna that so disgust Loos and lead him to declare ornament as culturally degenerate.

Loos concludes "Ornament and Crime" with the following statement: "Der moderne mensch verwendet die ornamente früherer und fremder kulturen nach seinem gutdünken. Seine eigene erfindung konzentriert er auf andere dinge."<sup>42</sup> The modern man does not misappropriate the decorative elements of cultures historical and foreign, focusing his energies instead on the creation of new styles. Loos's ideas do not, interestingly, stray terribly far from Riegl's call for the modern transformation of folk art a decade and a half earlier. Both were design theorists intent on obliterating aesthetic disparities in the name of a modern Austrian state. Riegl saw in the folk arts of the crown lands the potential for modern design to include these historically and culturally different motifs in an effort to subvert the homogeneity of nationalist movements. Loos, however, argues that these decorative traditions should be abandoned entirely, at least in the urban center of Vienna, where aesthetic culture should have by 1908 evolved beyond the point of criminal waste of quality materials and work hours, not to mention the problematic practice of forced cultural appropriation in Vienna's institutions for the applied arts. By considering "Ornament and Crime" in conjunction with the systematic advancement of the applied arts throughout the Habsburg Empire, the stylized spectacle of the 1908 Jubilee reveals itself as a major rupture in the conception of a diverse yet culturally unified Austro-Hungarian identity. As Loos criticizes the anachronistic dwellers of the monarchy, he is also acknowledging that their traditional lifestyles and stylistic expressions of identity do not correspond organically to those of the modernist evolution taking place in the urban capital of Vienna – a fact made shockingly visible by the "Parade of Nations" on June 12, 1908. By helping to design the Viennese portion of the Jubilee, modern creators of ornament such as Moser, Hoffmann, Urban and their students at the School of Applied Arts perpetuate such floundering, antiquated modes of cultural existence, whereas Loos argues

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<sup>41</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 91.

<sup>42</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 92.

that a minimal, internationalist aesthetic will guide Austria towards a more productive future in the world economy.

“Die Überflüssigen,” published in the leftist journal *März* in August 1908, examines the position of the applied arts both within the realm of high art and for general consumption. Using a conference of the Deutscher Werkbund in Munich as his critical point of departure and transferring his attack to the Wiener Werkstätte, Loos asks why these groups feel compelled constantly to justify their existence through an excessive number of high profile conferences and publications, through which they have attempted in vain and with much hubris to bring “art” into the realm of “crafts”: “[E]s war vor zehn jahren, daß sie kunst in das handwerk bringen müßten. Das konnte der handwerker nämlich nicht.”<sup>43</sup> This sarcastic tone shifts quickly to one of urgent concern for the aesthetic desires of modern man: “Dem modernen menschen ist die kunst eine hohe göttin, und er empfindet es als ein attentat auf die kunst, wenn man sie für gebrauchsgegenstände prostituiert.”<sup>44</sup> Loos’s polemical rhetoric demonstrates his extreme concern about cultural degeneracy evident in the introduction of [high] art features into the production of utilitarian objects. In calling art “a high goddess to modern man,” Loos emphasizes its sacred nature. “Prostituting it for utilitarian objects” amounts in Loos’s terms to an attack on art itself. He also condemns the way this process has affected the artisan, whose unique skills and expertise are undermined by the superficial dabbling of applied artists.

Expanding his critique of the applied arts movement, Loos turns next to the concerns of the modern consumer: “Aber das [attentat auf die kunst] empfanden die konsumenten auch. Der angriff der kulturlosen auf unsere moderne kultur schien abgeschlagen zu sein.”<sup>45</sup> Loos shifts to the past tense to describe the response of consumers to the decorated objects produced by “those without culture,” apparently stressing the passé nature of the applied arts discourse. The issue remains unresolved, however, because although the consumers have perceived the attack on art, Loos concludes that it [only?] “appeared to have been repulsed.” By including the consumer in this paradigm, he shifts his focus on agency within the Austrian applied arts narrative from the sponsors and producers of arts and crafts objects (the imperial authorities and artists of the *fin-de-siècle*) to their initially passive recipients. Loos senses that consumers are beginning to assert themselves intelligently against the flashy allure of objects by the likes of the Wiener Werkstätte. He goes on to describe a number of excessively ornate objects that recall not only Wiener Werkstätte design, but also that of the Baroque and Biedermeier periods – from an ink-well covered in nymphs to pieces of furniture covered in drums. Many such items have remained unsold, yet in the event of their purchase, the buyer will nevertheless feel ashamed to own them in two years time.<sup>46</sup> Loos’s account of this idle and wasteful state of culture recalls the crux of his argument in “Ornament and Crime” but it shifts the emphasis on artistic production in the world of artists and their elite patrons to the implications of this system for the average middle-class consumer. His critique stresses additionally the vital responsibility artists have to engage with the needs of the general public. Rather than dictate the appearance of forms in an attempt to shape the taste of the

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<sup>43</sup> “Die Überflüssigen” (1908) in Adolf Loos, *Trotzdem: Gesammelte Schriften 1900-1930* (Vienna: Prachner, 1997) 71.

<sup>44</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 71.

<sup>45</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 71.

<sup>46</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 71.

consumer to their own liking, artists should respond to the aesthetically restrained inclinations of the modern man – best represented, of course, by the preferences of Loos himself.

Loos argues that a common culture creates common forms, and he limits his focus to the German-speaking world in order to develop this notion. In doing so he necessarily privileges the current state of the applied arts in the “German” context over to their situation in the multiethnic imperial context that was of primary concern to contemporary Austrian politicians and the majority of applied artists working in Vienna. Loos claims that the furniture pieces of Henry Van de Velde have little in common with those of Josef Hoffmann, and the works of Richard Riemerschmied little to do with those of Josef Maria Olbrich; he poses the following question: “Für welche kultur sollte sich nun der deutsche entscheiden?”<sup>47</sup> The urgent desire to solve this problem of “German” culture frustrates the architect, and his inability to provide a clear answer to this question leads him eventually to ranting contradictions within his own arguments. By differentiating between the respective styles of German and Austrian artists, he concludes that a singular aesthetic for a “German” people does not exist and he instead favors a universal modernism over folk art and its derivatives. Loos now argues for a supranational visual vocabulary to guide the modern populations of Europe, a concept reminiscent of certain supranational aspects of the imperial Austrian arts program that he attacked vigorously in earlier essays.

He quickly returns to his critique of applied art objects in the industrialized states of Austria-Hungary and Germany, however, focusing on the economic implications of their production in these regions rather than on his thoughts about a supranational vocabulary for the objects of everyday use. He claims that these political concerns of the applied artist and his associates are already widely known: “Denn schon wurden stimmen laut, die ausgiebige beschäftigung der ‘angewandten künstler’ sei eine nationalökonomische frage für den staat und den produzenten. Das wurde den fabrikanten drei tage lang wiederholt.”<sup>48</sup> For Loos economic questions about the applied arts are outmoded, and he calls for artists and politicians at the conference in Munich to rethink the validity of this collaborative program. The architect’s call to move away from the manufacture of useful art objects and return to the singular nature of the artwork evokes the aesthetic ideals of previous periods such as the Renaissance. Loos imagines reinstating the aesthetic hierarchy that the establishment of the Museum of Art and Industry and the writings of its personalities such as Alois Riegl attempted to obliterate, and questions outright the very need for the applied artist, whose existence he contends is utterly obsolete.

Loos concludes “Die Überflüssigen” by calling for a distinct separation between objects for everyday use (*Gebrauchsgegenstände*) and works of art, a radical and reactionary departure from the aesthetic and political movements of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Industrialism has allowed the production of crafts to reach the apex of its potential, and the existence of these crafts outside of the artist’s workshop is now superfluous. Although decorated styles of objects such as umbrellas, suitcases, silver cigarette cases and clothing represent the fleeting fashion of the time, they will soon no longer correspond to contemporary trends, and the general public will finally recognize that they do not qualify

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<sup>47</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 71.

<sup>48</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 71-72.

as true works of art. Loos reviews the function of the applied arts at the beginning of the twentieth century in the following passage:

Gewiß, die kultivierten erzeugnisse unserer zeit haben mit der kunst keinen zusammenhang. *Die barbarischen zeiten, in denen kunstwerke mit gebrauchsgegenstände verquickt wurden, sind endgültig vorbei. Zum heile der kunst.* Denn dem neunzehnten jahrhundert wird einmal ein großes kapitel in der geschichte der menschheit gewidmet werden: ihm verdanken wir die großtat, die reinliche scheidung von kunst und gewerbe herbeigeführt zu haben.<sup>49</sup>

Loos's reference to Barbarian times resonates with Alois Riegl's writings on the late Roman art industry; contrary to Riegl, however, Loos does not praise the aesthetic consequences of this transcultural era nor its residual elements evident in the nineteenth century. Riegl found cultural and aesthetic harmony in the different styles (Roman, Germanic, Greek, Persian, etc.) that converged as a result of the Barbarian invasions, and subsequently stressed the manifestation of a new, multiethnic style in the applied arts. Loos does not deny the occurrence of this aesthetic process, but calls for a definitive end to it in terms of both cultural practice and the political state. By using the verb *verquicken* to describe the conflation of works of art and objects for everyday use, Loos also invokes the smooth and seamless quality of metal – there are suddenly no longer any distinctions between the two components, and all traces of their once separate states are rendered invisible.<sup>50</sup> Habsburg authorities have attempted to use politics and aesthetics in order to uphold an imperialist order and unite the monarchy's far-flung denizens by creating common forms and styles for the home. In Loos's mind the applied arts program has cheapened the notion of art, has insulted the consumer, and has proven to be completely irrelevant to the functioning of the state. In an increasingly international world, there is no longer a need for the ornamented modes of ethnic representation signified by the applied arts.

In "Kulturentartung" (1908), Loos elaborates his argument for the clear separation of art and craft, and he points to the *Kunstschau* as a public example of the misconceived conflation of the two. He discusses more specifically the effect of objects for everyday use (*Gebrauchsgegenstände*) on the human being as well as their greater implications for modern culture. Acknowledging that these objects make our life possible, Loos rejects the notion that these cultural products are the creation of any individual and collective identities; they are rather the products of time, as are the people who make use of them:

Wir haben unsere kultur, unsere formen, in denen sich unser leben abspielt, und die gebrauchsgegenstände, die uns dieses leben ermöglichen. Kein mensch, auch kein verein schuf uns unsere schränke, unsere zigaretten Dosen, unsere schmuckstücke. Die zeit schuf sie uns. Sie ändern sich von jahr zu jahr, von tag zu tag, von stunde zu stunde. *Denn von stunde*

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<sup>49</sup> My emphasis. Loos, *Trotzdem* 72.

<sup>50</sup> *Verquickung* is related etymologically to *Quecksilber*.

*zu stunde ändern wir uns, unsere anschauungen, unsere gewohnheiten. Und dadurch ändert sich unsere kultur.*<sup>51</sup>

Loos's final statement here that "culture changes itself" over time is key to understanding his attitude toward individual agency and the autocratic nature of the Empire's in this critique of the applied arts program. While they were laying the foundations of the Museum of Art and Industry and its associated School for Arts and Crafts at the end of the nineteenth century, imperial authorities in Vienna hoped to use the applied arts to guide the public to a common lifestyle that would help transform Austria-Hungary into an artistically innovative and industrially advanced world force. In "Die Überflüssigen," Loos confiscates the power from the decorative artists and political authorities, who attempt to define culture through their programs of design, and with a sense of moral endeavor hands it instead to everyday consumers, who must decide how these objects can serve their own purposes and sensibilities. *We* are, he reminds us, subject to our own time, it and no designer shapes our ever-changing culture and forms. Decorative trends evolve continuously, just as we continually change in our appearance, our views, and our habits. The new collective identity that Loos sketches is one of modern individuals with cultural autonomy, free from an aesthetic preferred by the state and executed by commercially established artists' groups. Here Loos presumably has the designers of the Wiener Werkstätte in mind, as he criticizes this dictation of cultural experience and everyday life: "Wir sitzen nicht so, weil ein tischler einen sessel so oder so konstruiert hat, sondern der tischler macht den sessel so, weil wir so oder so sitzen wollen. Und daher ist – zur freude eines jeden, der unsere kultur liebt – die tätigkeit des werkbundes wirkunglos."<sup>52</sup> The trademarked style of these groups has no bearing on modern, rational man for whom Loos is the foremost spokesman. Identifying himself with the lay person, Loos more or less fancies himself a modern architect on a humanitarian mission, ridiculing attempts to control the natural manner of sitting by designing an artistically conceived chair. The proper carpenter makes a chair that corresponds to the way people want to sit, regardless of the momentary forms that are "stylish" yet absurdly uncomfortable.

Continuing his attack on artists' groups that attempt to define the style of an era through their cooperative enterprises, Loos writes, "Das ist unnötige arbeit. Den stil unserer zeit haben wir ja. Wir haben ihn überall dort, wo der künstler, also das mitglied jenes bundes, bisher seine nase noch nicht hineingesteckt hat."<sup>53</sup> Unnamed artists who once belonged to the Secession (undoubtedly those of the newly established Wiener Werkstätte) have entered the realm of carpentry and are now attempting to conquer that of tailoring (*Schneiderei*). Loos describes their ridiculous clothing style as follows:

Die mitglieder des damals noch nicht bestehenden bundes gehörten der sezession an, trugen gehröcke in schottischen stoffen mit samtaufschlägen und steckten ein stück pappendeckel in den stehumlegkragen – marke 'ver sacrum' –, der, mit schwarzer seide überzogen, die illusion einer dreimal un den hals gebundenen krawatte erweckte.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 74.

<sup>52</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 74.

<sup>53</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 75.

<sup>54</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 75.

This caricature of Viennese modernism exemplifies Loos's critique of ornament by highlighting the outlandish forays the Secessionists have made into fashion design. The impracticality and evanescence of these designs mocks the integrity of the Viennese tailor, who, with his basic clothing patterns, also defines culture on the most practical of levels. Loos's brilliant image of Secessionists inserting a piece of "Ver Sacrum" cardboard into their collars highlights the superficial Viennese obsession with "branding" its aesthetic products for commercial profit.

For Loos the question of beauty should play no role in assessing the applied arts. Asking whether or not cutlery or leather wares are beautiful is in Loos's view to ask the wrong question. He stresses instead that utilitarian objects should reflect the time and culture from which they arise and that they should be well made. On the latter point he adds with pride that "We Austrians can cradle ourselves in the proud consciousness that these things are produced in no country on the globe with such excellence [as in Austria], except in England":

Sie [diese Sachen] sind im geiste unserer zeit und daher richtig. Sie hätten niemals in eine andre zeit hineingepaßt und hätten auch nicht von anderen völkern verwendet werden können... Und wir in Österreich können uns in dem stolzen bewußtsein wiegen, daß diese dinge, außer in England, in keinem lande des erdballs in gleicher güte erzeugt werden.<sup>55</sup>

Not only are these objects specific to the era in which they have been created, Loos emphasizes that no other peoples could ever have utilized them. In emphasizing the cultural as well as temporal specificity of these objects, Loos's words once again contradict Riegl's plan for a transethnic design aesthetic, specifically the one he delineates in *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*. In calling for production of culturally specific and time-bound objects to be both used and created by one group of people, Loos's arguments run counter to the imperial vision that Habsburg-funded institutions, artists and events such as the Jubilee sought to realize. The notion then that an object produced in Cracow, for example, is not suitable for use in Budapest and vice versa favors a singular, locally-based aesthetic over a multiethnic imperial one.

Loos goes on again to attack the Wiener Werkstätte and Josef Hoffmann in particular, writing that he prefers his smooth cigarette case to one designed by "Professor so-and-so," and he does not consider someone with a silver-headed cane to be a gentleman. Hoffmann had his time and place, but by 1908 he has not progressed enough as a designer to realize that he cannot make furniture more beautiful by using strange veneers and excessive ornamentation. Amplifying his argument from "Ornament and Crime," Loos claims here that modern man finds those without tattoos to be far more beautiful than those with decorated skin, even if the decoration is derived from Michelangelo himself. These criticisms build up to the Wiener Werkstätte's prominent role in the *Kunstschau*, as Loos concludes:

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<sup>55</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 76.

Vor allem aber empfindet der moderne mensch die verquickung der kunst mit dem gebrauchsgegenstande als die stärkste erniedrigung, die man ihr antun kann. Goethe war ein moderner mensch. Ich vermisse sein wort – er und Bacon und Ruskin und könig Salomo werden auf der mauer der kunstschau zitiert, - das vor allem wegen seines direkten hinweises dort nicht fehlen dürfte: ‘Die kunst, die dem alten seine fußboden bereitete und dem christen seine kirchenhimmel wölbte, wird jetzt auf dosen und armbänder verkrümmelt. *Diese zeiten sind schlechter als man denkt.*’<sup>56</sup>

Once again Loos refers to this aesthetic process of conflation as a *Verquickung*, going as far as to claim it is the strongest imaginable humiliation of art. By claiming Goethe as a modern man, Loos regards him as a spiritual contemporary and laments the lost understanding of high art. The loose association of timeless great men that Loos evokes in the grouping of Goethe, Bacon, Ruskin and King Solomon is a hodgepodge, which reminds the reader of the melding of applied and high arts that Loos deplors. Taken as a group these figures transcend time and culture, yet there is no common thread that binds them together. Their words are not written on the wall of the *Kunstschau* in a literal sense, but rather the citing of all these figures together relationship correlates the apparently random assortment of applied arts on display at the exhibition. The universal words of Goethe are unfortunately missing, as they highlight the demeaning practice of crumpling “art” on arm bands and containers, when it should be fulfilling its former role of framing the most sacred of spaces. This misapplication or abuse of art reveals that these times are worse than one thinks; it contributes to the latent cultural anxiety that Loos seeks to uncover. The close association between aesthetics and cultural degeneration makes Loos a harbinger of modernist thought. His references to Goethe, Bacon, Ruskin and King Solomon in this piece may imply a spirit of internationalism that transcends time. While playing with these examples of specific cultural contexts, he seems to look forward to an ultimately unifying sense of internationalism in the Western world.

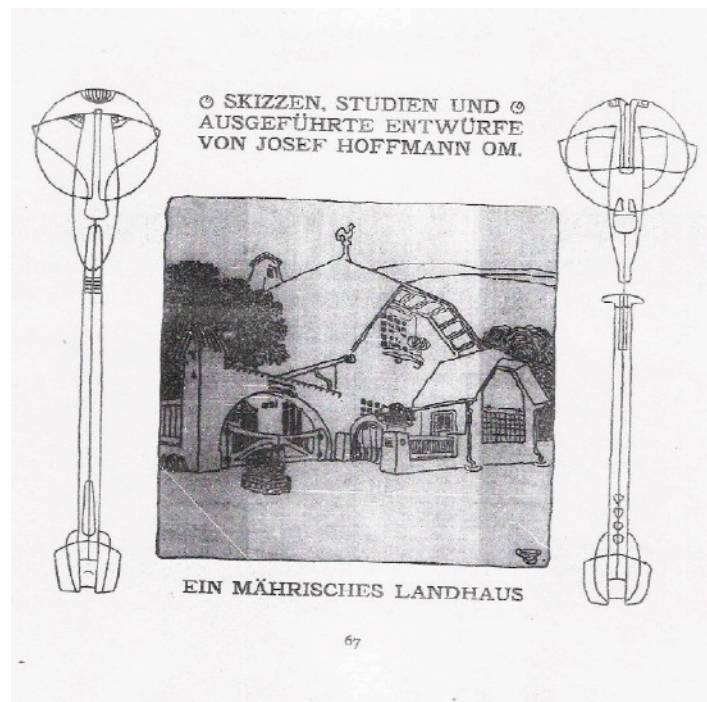
At the outbreak of World War I, the debate between national and imperial identities in the Austrian lands becomes more pronounced in the writings of leading cultural figures, and Loos was no exception. In “Heimatkunst” (1914), Loos addresses many of the issues surrounding the applied arts and folk culture that had emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. The essay questions the very notion of *Heimat*. This may be a gesture in the direction of the war that has broken out during the very year in which Loos is writing. He grapples with the validity of *heimisch* forms and their place within a modernized state; he argues adamantly that new architectural and applied arts (*gewerblich*) forms for a particular locus must fit its general layout and aesthetic. Loos laments that many Viennese architects have as late been interested in bringing provincial art forms into the urban sphere, and he argues that such forms fail to correspond organically to the city’s architectural style. He writes: “Wenn ich mich bei der oper aufstelle und zum schwarzenbergplatz hinunterblicke, so habe ich das intensive gefühl: Wien! Wien, die millionenstadt, Wien, die metropole eines großen reiches. Wenn ich aber die zinshäuser am stubenring betrachte, so habe ich nur ein gefühl: fünfstöckiges Mährisch-Ostrau.”<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> My emphasis. Loos, *Trotzdem* 77.

<sup>57</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem: Gesammelte Schriften 1900-1930* (Vienna: Prachner, 1997) 123.

Loos quite rightly identifies Vienna, which he calls the “city of a million,” as the impressive metropolis of a great empire.<sup>58</sup> The stark visual contrast between the vista from the Opera (at the center of the Ringstraße) to Schwarzenbergplatz and the appearance of the modest, five-story, Moravian-inspired houses on Stubenring (on the Ring’s south side) mirrors the aesthetic clash in the Jubilee parade between the urban and provincial contingents that marched together in the parade around the Ring in the imperial capital. As the center of a multiethnic empire, individual national or provincial styles are for Loos decidedly inappropriate to Vienna in terms of both aesthetic design and cultural content.

In Loos’s criticism of architects who bring provincial styles into the urban realm, the specific reference to the five-story houses on the Stubenring maybe be pointed directly at the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry and the School for Arts and Crafts, both of which were located on precisely that part of the Ringstraße. The allusion to Moravian architecture in Vienna (especially that of *Ostrau*, the easternmost and most traditional region of that crown land) also underscores the ongoing feud between Loos and the Wiener Werkstätte, particularly its co-founder Josef Hoffmann. Even before he instigated what was to become the premier organization for the Austrian applied arts, Hoffmann had been drafting designs for updated versions of traditional Moravian houses since 1900, when the third volume of *Ver Sacrum* included his sketches for a Moravian country house (as illustrated below). And, the architect Hoffmann had also actually built an “authentic” country house in 1908, that was featured prominently on the premises of the *Kunstschau*.



**Fig. 24**  
**Josef Hoffmann, “Ein mährisches Landhaus”**  
**From *Ver Sacrum*, Vol. 3 (1900)**

<sup>58</sup> At this point in time Vienna was one of the five most densely populated cities in the world.



Returning to the title of the essay in question, Loos attacks the very notion of a *Heimatkunst* by calling it a “lie”: “Die lüge von der heimatkunst war den baumeistern der renaissance fremd. Sie bauten alle im römischen stil. In Spanien und Deutschland, in England und Rußland. Und schufen dadurch den stil ihrer heimat, mit dem die leute von heute jede weitere entwicklung totschiagen wollen.”<sup>59</sup> As in “Die Überflüssigen,” Loos elevates the Renaissance as an era of true artistic ideals, when cultures from Spain to Germany built in the “Roman” style. Also acute is the problem of inauthenticity brought about by the presence of “Heimatkunst” in a supranational urban space, and the subsequent cultural misunderstandings brought about by such a practice. Although successful modern architects might work in a generic style, Loos argues that environmental factors will undoubtedly affect the style of their work, thus creating appropriately unique designs. A prime example of this lies in the fact that all architects of the Vienna Baroque were Italian; Loos writes, “[S]elbst der fremde meister hat in einer stadt nur seinem eigenen gewissen zu folgen. Das übrige kann er ruhig der luft, die er atmet, überlassen.”<sup>60</sup> Taken in conjunction with Riegl’s claim in *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie* that interethnic contact and cultural transfer often inspire the overarching aesthetic of a given age and culture, Loos seems to suggest here that the atmosphere of Vienna will necessarily cause the artist to modify his own idiom as indicated to create suitable structures for this environment.

In a passage that once again upholds artisanal practices, Loos describes the building process of the peasant, who goes about constructing his house in a practical and diligent manner, laying brick upon brick, instead of reflecting on whether or not the roof he makes is of aesthetic value. Loos thus criticizes the artists or architects who adopt and novelize folk-based or provincial practices for the urban sphere, falsely claiming a connection to regional artistic practices and conventions. The architect, Loos argues, cannot and should not work like the peasant: “Er [der Architekt] arbeitet nach einem festen plan. Und wenn er die naivetät des bauern kopieren wollte, so ginge er allen kultivierten menschen genau so auf die nerven wie es die ischler dirndln oder die oberösterreichisch daherredenden börsianer tun.”<sup>61</sup> He proceeds to call this irksome, affected naïvete on the part of modern Viennese architects ridiculous and undignified, and exposes the problematic practices of those architects who would appropriate the exotic and picturesque qualities of folk art for their own novel purposes.<sup>62</sup>

Loos suggests that this line of thought will lead to straw-covered apartment buildings and concert halls, an exaggerated image he uses to describe how ridiculous it is for artists to attempt to introduce rural, provincial styles into the imperial “Millionenstadt” of Vienna. He also attacks Austrian architects who subscribe to German architecture journals and design buildings that could as easily be in Magdeburg or Essen; he emphasizes that these styles are appropriate for the residents of those strictly German cities, but that Vienna’s position is far more complex. There also seems to be a growing trend to model buildings after those in Berlin-Grunewald or Munich-Dachau (*münchnerei*, as Loos names this phenomenon). Loos argues that “wienerisch ist anders. Wir haben so

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<sup>59</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 125.

<sup>60</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 126.

<sup>61</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 126.

<sup>62</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 127.

viel italienische luft über die alpen herübergeweht bekommen, daß wir wie unsere väter in einem stile bauen sollten, der gegen die außenwelt abschließt.”<sup>63</sup>

In discussing his own work, Loos writes the following:

Es wurde mir von sehr autorisierter seite der vorwurf gemacht, daß ich, obwohl ich die heimatliche seite des hauses am michaelerplatz so sehr hervorhebe, marmor aus Griechenland herbeigeht habe. Nun, die wiener küche ist wienerisch, obwohl sie gewürze aus dem fernen orient verwendet, und ein wiener haus kann auch echt und wahr, also wienerisch sein, wenn das kupferdach aus Amerika ist.<sup>64</sup>

This statement emphasizes that the Viennese style functions as a sort of melting pot for all styles and materials of the world, from the Far East, Greece, and America. For Loos, the design of unique and distinctive buildings is not the solution to creating an easily understood, modern style for the public that will also embody the *Heimat*. Instead, it proves much more effective to allow change to happen organically and not to impose new forms on the public eye. Loos concludes:

Die beste form ist immer schon bereit und niemand fürchte sich, sie anzuwenden, wenn sie auch in ihrem grunde von einem andern herrührt. Genug der originalgenies! Wiederholen wir uns unaufhörlich selbst! Ein haus gleiche dem andern! Man kommt dann zwar nicht in die ‘deutsche kunst und decoration’ und wir nicht kunstgewerbeschule-professor, aber man hat seiner zeit, sich, seinem volke und der menschheit am besten gedient. Und damit seiner heimat!<sup>65</sup>

This attack on the artist-professors associated with the Secession, Wiener Werkstätte and the *Kunstgewerbeschule* highlights Loos’s plan to eradicate decorative elements from his own work and his attempt to explain the ultimate futility of ornamentation in the creation of an Austrian *Heimatkunst*.

Following the end of the First World War and the subsequent dissolution of the Habsburg Empire on November 12, 1918, Loos struck an optimistic note about the future of art in a social democratic state. “Richtlinien für ein Kunstamt,” written as a supplement to “Der Friede” on March 29, 1919, explains the relationship that the state and art have had in the past and suggests a possible direction this relationship could take in the First Republic. Loos opens the essay by remarking that the state needs to decide whether or not it should help artists, explaining that “[i]n der Monarchie war der Herrscher der Schutzherr der Kunst. In der Republik ist es das Volk.”<sup>66</sup> He goes on to praise the new leadership role that the people will have in the wake of the empire’s demise, and ultimately to present a detailed plan for how the people should structure arts programs in order to maintain its status in the new socialist state. This admonition of Loos’s amounts to a reversal of the late

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<sup>63</sup> Loos, *Trotzdem* 129.

<sup>64</sup> Loos 129. Loos’s comment about Viennese cuisine is rather similar to the one made by Friedrich Torberg at the beginning of *Die Tante Jolesch* (1977).

<sup>65</sup> Loos 130.

<sup>66</sup> Loos, *Die Potemkin’sche Stadt* 148.

nineteenth-century imperial programs to guide or manage the production of folk art in Austria-Hungary. Instead of imperial administrators attempting to determine how art should function as a unifying force for the various peoples of the empire, Loos suggests that the people themselves should decide and plan their own programs that will make the people rather than the ruler the protector of the arts.

Loos contrasts the way that art had functioned for the centuries-old, now-defunct monarchy with the way it should function in the modern twentieth century:

Die Zeitgenossen des Künstlers gehören verschiedenen Perioden an. In der gewesenen Monarchie verteilten sich die Einwohner auf die letzten tausend Jahre. (In den Karpathen gibt es Völker, die noch zu Zeiten der Völkerwanderung leben.) Im neuen Reiche verteilen sich die Menschen auf die letzten drei Jahrhunderte. Sprechen diese Zustände bloß für eine Änderung aus ökonomischen Gründen, so gebietet der Geist dem Staate, dem Künstlermenschen jene Umgebung zu schaffen, die ihm die geringsten Widerstände entgegensetzt. Die geringsten Widerstände werden ihm jene bieten, die nicht nur leiblich, sondern auch geistig seine Zeitgenossen sind: Menschen aus dem 20. Jahrhundert.

*Der Staat hat daher die Pflicht, das Volk dem Künstler möglichst nahezubringen.*<sup>67</sup>

Instead of bringing modern art to the people in an effort to suppress local nationalism – an effort which, as discussed earlier, intended to show those in the provinces that imperially sponsored art, through its abstraction with hints of folk motifs, might integrate all peoples into a functional Habsburg state – Loos proposes that the people reveal themselves to the modern artist. In reality, the Habsburg program of supporting the production of folk art, or art “for and by the people,” clearly failed in its hope to unite the various peoples of the monarchy through its “universal” and supraregional character. Loos hopes that art will successfully serve the people in a post-imperial Austrian state.

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<sup>67</sup> Loos, *Die Potemkin'sche Stadt* 149-150. My emphasis.

## CHAPTER 4

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### Modern Design as Imperial Critique in Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*

Contemporary critiques of modern design and imperial politics intersect forcefully in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Robert Musil's massive meditation on Austria-Hungary just before World War I. The minimal plot of the unfinished novel revolves significantly around the Parallel Action (*Parallelaktion*), a bureaucratic entanglement in which a motley array of Viennese socialites and politicians gather to organize the commemoration of what would have been Franz Joseph's seventieth year on the throne. Although this jubilee event is to take place in 1918, the novel does not quite make it out of 1913, a temporal device that suspends the project necessarily between *fin-de-siècle* decadence and the violence that would result in the Empire's dissolution. Since 1918 would have also marked the German Emperor Wilhelm II's thirtieth year of rule, the Austrian committee embarks on a frenetic scheme to outdo the Prussian celebration and claim Austria as the greater and more peaceful world power. Musil's protagonist is Ulrich, a thirty-two year old mathematician who has decided to take a year off from life; his world is a pointillistic blending of the aesthetic, political, religious, and scientific discourses that render the multifarious character of Viennese mentality around 1900. By tracing the novel's ekphrastic and social commentaries on decorative trends alongside the political developments of the Parallel Action, a series of scathing observations on Viennese design emerges, one that underscores the insidious invasion of the applied arts into all realms of bourgeois life while providing the aesthetic backdrop that mocks the highly ineffective inner workings of the Austrian imperial state.

Musil accomplishes a brilliant satire of the applied arts program by interweaving descriptions of interiors and facades with the self-righteous monologues of Vienna's often vacuous personalities and the ongoing parodies of Habsburg bureaucracy. The novel famously employs an essayistic structure that exposes the fragmentary structure of an imperial latticework composed intermittently of hollow reeds and splintered wood. As Michael André Bernstein has discussed extensively in *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History*, Musil is quite different from other Austrian modernists, including Joseph Roth, in that he refuses to conduct a nostalgic elegy for the ashes of the Habsburg Empire; "[i]ndeed, the most satiric parts of Musil's novel describe a world in stasis or in a

self-perpetuating muddle, rather than on the verge of disintegration.”<sup>1</sup> This stasis complements the *Möglichkeitssinn* (“sense of possibility”) that Ulrich finds himself grappling with throughout the text and that is responsible for the continuous deferment of meaningful action within the bureaucratic agenda. The disconnected conversations and subsequent divergences that shape committee meetings for the Parallel Action prove to be whimsical and in vain, yet they are by no means unrealistic. In fact, they resonate rather strongly with the fanciful visions of Habsburg authorities in 1908, as they designed the Empire for the Emperor’s Diamond Jubilee. With regard to Musil’s ridiculing of these all-too-familiar imperial endeavors, Bernstein comments:

The Collateral Campaign [the Parallel Action] is *not* ludicrous because the ruler it planned to honor would be dead and his dynasty overthrown before the celebration’s announced date, but because in its intellectual triviality and ideological blindness, the Campaign represented a ludicrous idea from the moment it was conceived.<sup>2</sup>

The “sideshadowing,” or gesturing “to a present dense with multiple, and mutually exclusive, possibilities for what is to come,”<sup>3</sup> that Musil employs so skillfully is essential to consider when approaching the manifold discourses that intersect within the novel. The intricacies of the Parallel Action alongside the characters’ obsessive preoccupations with matters of design reflect the utopian aspirations of both imperial bureaucrats and modern artists in their scheme of enabling first aesthetic and then political unity within the Empire. This narrative tool of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* thus uncovers and satirizes the multidirectional potential of the applied arts program as its diverse constituents envisaged it in the final years of Habsburg rule.

Following the death of Ulrich’s father at the conclusion of Book One, his patriotic work with the Parallel Action fades symbolically out of focus, and the protagonist retreats into an incestuous and mystical affair with his long-long sister Agathe. Allusions to the social complications arising from design do, however, linger as Musil struggles to finish what, many have claimed, could never be finished.<sup>4</sup> The overlapping patterns of internal political strife and aesthetic fanaticism that enveloped *fin-de-siècle* Vienna may have found their most suitable surface on the porous fabric of the Parallel Action, yet the applied arts are conspicuously on display in other corners of the novel as well. In its treatment of visual culture and Habsburg policy in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, this final chapter will demonstrate how Musil collects the shards of the imperial applied arts scheme to reflect critically upon the infiltration of such objects into the bourgeois interiors of Viennese salons and the dilettantish minds of designers and art enthusiasts.

Before Musil even introduces “the man without qualities,” he offers a candid description of that man’s dwelling in the novel’s second chapter, “Haus und Wohnung des

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<sup>1</sup> Michael André Bernstein, *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 104.

<sup>2</sup> Bernstein 96.

<sup>3</sup> Bernstein 1.

<sup>4</sup> Michael André Bernstein argues, for instance, that “once Musil rejected ending the novel with the melodramatic thunderclap of the outbreak of war...[it] had to remain unfinished for strictly internal reasons” (106-107). Several other scholars, including Stefan Jonsson in his excellent study *Subject Without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity*, have concurred with Bernstein’s assessment.

Mannes ohne Eigenschaften.” As Ulrich has no qualities of his own, it seems appropriate that his living space define his character before his actual persona. The house itself is located on the same street as the car accident that opens the novel; if the couple involved in the crash had been able to drive a little ways farther, they would have enjoyed this delightful sight:

Das war ein teilweise noch erhalten gebliebener Garten aus dem achtzehnten oder gar aus dem siebzehnten Jahrhundert, und wenn man an seinem schmiedeeisernen Gitter vorbeikam, so erblickte man zwischen Bäumen, auf sorgfältig geschorenem Rasen etwas wie ein kurzflügeliges Schlößchen, ein Jagd- oder Liebesschloßchen vergangener Zeiten. Genau gesagt, seine Traggewölbe waren aus dem siebzehnten Jahrhundert, der Park und der Oberstock trugen das Ansehen des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts, die Fassade war im neunzehnten Jahrhundert erneuert und etwas verdorben worden, das Ganze hatte also einen etwas verwackelten Sinn, so wie übereinander photographierte Bilder. . . Und wenn das Weiße, Niedliche, Schöne seine Fenster geöffnet hatte, blickte man in die vornehme Stille der Bücherwände einer Gelehrtenwohnung.<sup>5</sup>

The image is of a charming yet decaying structure with its Viennese qualities signified on a number of levels. Perhaps most recognizably Austrian is the house’s generic appropriation of Baroque façades, which the art historian Albert Ilg designated as Austria’s “national style” in his hefty 1895 monograph on Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach.<sup>6</sup> The well-manicured lawn and intimate glimpse of the miniature chateau through the wrought-iron railings gives the property an aristocratic flair, and one cannot help but think of its association with a hunting lodge or love shack as a historical reference to the tragically romantic double suicide of Crown Prince Rudolf and his mistress Mary Vetsera at Mayerling. By illuminating the layered construction of the building over the span of three centuries, Musil attributes to this lone, slightly decrepit structure the conflation of temporality that Adolf Loos criticizes in “Ornament and Crime.” The nineteenth-century renovated façade is already a bit damaged, and the house exudes the musty scent of unredeemable decay without any dynamic potential for the modern future; “the man without qualities” could very well be one of Loos’s neighbors straggling behind modernity and perpetuating cultural anachronisms. Musil casts a dubious yet documentary light onto the scene, as he likens this blurred portrait to a set of superimposed photographic images and thereby gives it a pewter-like finish. The tone quickly shifts, however, in the paragraph’s final sentences, as the dainty little white chateau becomes surprisingly animated, opening its windows so that one may peek into the noble calm of the book-lined walls of a scholar’s apartment. Although Musil stops here almost unexpectedly, the passage reveals with refreshing concision the protagonist’s location within the paradox of dilapidated Baroque structures and nineteenth-century bourgeois comfort that typify the Austrian imperial capital.

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2002) 11-12. All further citations from the novel come from this edition and will be placed hereafter in parenthetical references.

<sup>6</sup> Albert Ilg, *Die Fischer von Erlach* (Vienna: Konegen, 1895). See chapter 1 for a discussion of Ilg’s early association with the imperial applied arts program.

Three chapters later Musil presents Ulrich, whose surname is withheld on account of his father's dignity and who, sometime between his childhood and his adolescence, wrote a striking and controversial essay on Austrian patriotism before going on to study at Vienna's prestigious Theresianum. Between his late teens and his early thirties, Ulrich became a mathematician and enjoyed a number of experiences, some rather productive and some utterly futile, both abroad and around Austria. Now thirty-two years of age, Ulrich has decided to settle down back at home in Vienna and lay his claim to the neglected little chateau. Instead of restoring the house to its Baroque grandeur, Ulrich permits himself to renovate it according to his own preferences, a task which proves to be most complicated for this man without qualities. As Ulrich is just about to embark on a year of self-discovery framed vaguely by its *Möglichkeitssinn*, Musil foregrounds the importance of weighing all possibilities in the realm of interior design: "Von der stilreinen Rekonstruktion bis zur vollkommenen Rücksichtslosigkeit standen ihm dafür alle Grundsätze zur Verfügung, und ebenso boten sich seinem Geist alle Stile, von der Assyren bis zum Kubismus an. Was sollte er wählen?" (19). The assortment of styles at Ulrich's disposal ranges from the most ancient to the most modern, and both poles are by nature equally international. By naming Cubism as one option, Musil sets Ulrich into a dialogue with the avant-garde ethos of early-twentieth-century Western Europe, a connection that contrasts sharply with the connotations of Austrian traditionalism invoked by the house's washed-out Baroque exterior.

Old Austria and the international avant-garde forge a compromise in the discussion that follows, a recognizable half-parody of the modern design discourse in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna:

Der moderne Mensch wird in der Klinik geboren und stirbt in der Klinik: also soll er auch wie in einer Klinik wohnen! – Diese Forderung hatte soeben ein führender Baukünstler aufgestellt, und ein anderer Reformter der Inneneinrichtung verlangte verschiebbare Wände der Wohnungen, mit der Begründung, daß der Mensch dem Menschen zusammenlebend vertrauen lernen müsse und nicht sich separatistische abschließen dürfe. Es hatte damals gerade eine neue Zeit begonnen (denn das tut sie in jedem Augenblick), und eine neue Zeit braucht einen neuen Stil (19-20).

This passage alludes clearly to the popularity of Wiener Werkstätte design throughout the bourgeois consciousness. The idea that one should live as if in a clinic conjures up a vision of the Sanatorium Purkersdorf (1904-05), the progressive facility commissioned by Victor Zuckerkandl, the brother-in-law of the art critic Berta Zuckerkandl, who incidentally convinced the leading industrialist to choose Josef Hoffmann as its chief architect. Alongside Hoffmann's compelling designs, the project featured the work of the group's most prominent members, including Koloman Moser and Gustav Klimt, who ensured that their brand of the applied arts infiltrated the space in every conceivable way. Musil remarks that a leading architect, possibly Hoffmann, had postulated this demand for clinical living spaces, while another reformer of interior design called for movable partitions in apartments so that men learn to trust one another by living in an arrangement that does not allow for separatist isolation. The relationship between interior design and one's relationship to the social world resonates with how modern Viennese designers had

imagined the applied arts as a means to promote cross-cultural understanding and ultimately a harmonious environment for all. By stating that “a new time needs a new style,” Musil all but cites the Secessionist motto, “Der Zeit ihre Kunst, der Kunst ihre Freiheit.” Ulrich is living at the dawn of a new era and this new era necessitates a corresponding style, presumably one that places the greatest significance on defining an individual’s modern mentality and how he may express it fashionably through home décor.

The tone of this paragraph becomes increasingly satirical, as the narrator reveals that Ulrich has been an avid reader of art journals, an activity which gives him the confidence to dabble a bit on his own in the realm of interior design:

Zu Ulrichs Glück besaß das Schloßhäuschen, so wie er es vorfand, bereits drei Stile übereinander, so daß man wirklich nicht alles damit vornehmen konnte, was verlangt wurde; dennoch fühlte er sich von der Verantwortung, sich ein Haus einrichten zu dürfen, gewaltig aufgerüttelt, und die Drohung “Sage mir, wie du wohnst, und ich sage dir, wer du bist,” die er wiederholt in Kunstzeitschriften gelesen hatte, schwebte über seinem Haupt. Nach eingehender Beschäftigung mit diesen Zeitschriften kam er zu der Entscheidung, daß er den Ausbau seiner Persönlichkeit doch lieber selbst in die Hand nehmen wolle, und began seine zukünftigen Möbel eigenhändig zu entwerfen (20).

Although the three superimposed styles on the little chateau save Ulrich by limiting his design options, renovating the house into a suitable dwelling still proves to be complicated for him. The stylistic dictations of trendy art journals force him to take responsibility for his living space, which will encompass ultimately his personal identity and assign him a social standing. After reading enough of these journals, Ulrich decides to take matters into his own hands and design his own furniture, a prospect that would have had Adolf Loos, that great champion of the trained artisan, rolling in his grave. Ulrich’s casual foray into the design and construction of his own furniture is fleeting at best, yet this is a defining moment for the protagonist and his position within the yet-to-be introduced cultural sphere of Kakania. Musil’s description of his activity traces significantly the slight curvature of the trademarked Wiener Werkstätte style, while at the same time incorporating elements of Loos’s clean utilitarianism:

Aber wenn er sich soeben eine wuchtige Eindrucksform ausgedacht hatte, fiel ihm ein, daß man an ihre Stelle doch ebensogut eine technisch-schmalkräftige Zweckform setzen könnte, und wenn er eine von Kraft ausgezehrte Eisenbetonform entwarf, erinnerte er sich an die mährhaft mageren Formen eines dreizehnjährigen Mädchens und begann zu träumen, statt sich zu entschließen (20).

In his self-apprenticeship, Ulrich realizes quickly that sleek, purpose-driven lines are preferable to impressive yet bulky forms, and therefore subscribes to the most up-to-date style endorsed by figures such as Loos. Ulrich’s attempts at artistry, however, degenerate quickly as the emaciated form of reinforced concrete reminds him of the slender outline of a thirteen-year old girl, causing him to dream away instead of making up his own mind.



The identification of a sensual human form with a piece of furniture alludes to the identifying traits of *Jugendstil* design and is a practice that Loos criticizes harshly in "Ornament and Crime." In Ulrich's fixation on the tempting figure of an adolescent girl, Musil evokes the erotic drawings of Egon Schiele and, perhaps to a greater extent, the early graphic works of Oskar Kokoschka, most notably *Die träumenden Knaben* (1908), his first commission from the Wiener Werkstätte.

Ulrich soon gives up his short-lived stint as an interior designer and leaves the task to those better qualified. His inability to follow through suggests the amateurship behind the more superficial strands of the applied arts craze; this bourgeois phenomenon of dabbling also laid the foundations for Loos's critique of the Wiener Werkstätte. Instead of opting for a total life aesthetic in the renovation of the house, the interior space of Ulrich's habitat seems to perpetuate the superimposition of generically Austrian styles that has characterized its washed-out façade:

Nun, der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, der in seine Heimat zurückgekehrt war, tat auch den zweiten Schritt, um sich von außen, durch die Lebensumstände bilden zu lassen, er überließ an diesem Punkt seiner Überlegungen die Einrichtung seines Hauses einfach dem Genie seiner Lieferanten, in der sicheren Überzeugung, daß sie für Überlieferung, Vorurteile und Beschränktheit schon sorgen würden. Er selbst frischte nur die alten Linien auf, die von früher da waren, die dunklen Hirschgeweihe unter den weißen Wölbungen der kleinen Halle oder die steife Decke des Salons, und tat im übrigen alles hinzu was ihm zweckhaft und bequem vorkam... Es war ein entzückendes kleines Palais, was er da besaß; fast mußte man es so nennen, denn es war ganz so, wie man sich seinesgleichen denkt, eine geschmackvolle Residenz für einen Residenten, wie ihn sich Möbel-, Teppich- und Installationsfirmen vorgestellt hatten, die auf ihrem Gebiete führen (21).

As Ulrich is without any qualities of his own, he must take on those of his environment. He has returned to his homeland and has surrendered his tastes to the visions of professional interior designers. Although Musil declines to go into a lengthy description of the end result, it is safe to assume that the designers have transformed the chateau into an acceptably modern abode, and the narrator describes how Ulrich has given himself the minor task of sprucing up the older lines. These fixtures from an earlier time include the dark deer antlers under the white arches of the little hall and the prim ceiling of the drawing room. While this former interior suggests the rustic, Alpine quality of Austrian folk culture and the latter the sophisticated formality of the Austrian aristocracy, the house does contain everything that Ulrich deems both functional and comfortable. The juxtaposition of modern functionality with the "older" styles of provincial and imperial Austria provides an incisive commentary on Viennese design between the *fin-de-siècle* and World War I. The awkwardly eclectic fusion of the house's interior, cloaked in an anachronistic exterior layered with genuine Baroque excess and the feigned façade of Historicism, indicates the generic mediocrity of Ulrich's world and becomes a metaphor for the varied aesthetic and political constituents of his Austrian homeland. The foregrounding of contemporary design issues in introducing the novel's protagonist reveals

the consequential preoccupation with the applied arts among the Viennese bourgeoisie, including such unimpressive characters as Ulrich. Upon returning to Austria, Ulrich must consider carefully his aesthetic choices; Musil is keen to emphasize this before presenting the bizarre kaleidoscope of cultures that is Kakania.

The introduction to Ulrich's homeland of "Kakania" in Chapter Eight depicts a benign yet inefficient Central European state that mirrors the individual personalities that will orchestrate the Parallel Action. By alluding to the discourse of "art and industry" and the manifestation of such ideals throughout the crown lands, the narrator touches upon the central role of design in coloring the imperial realm. In the novel's very first mention of Kakania, Musil describes a place that reads like a parody of Crown Prince Rudolf's introduction to his massive *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild* project:

Dort, in Kakanien, diesem seither untergegangenen, unverstandenen Staat, der in so vielem ohne Anerkennung vorbildlich gewesen ist, gab es auch Tempo, aber nicht zuviel Tempo. So oft man in der Fremde an dieses Land dachte, schwebte vor den Augen die Erinnerung an die weißen, breiten, wohlhabenden Straßen aus der Zeit der Fußmärsche und Extraposten, die es nach allen Richtungen wie Flüsse der Ordnung, wie Bänder aus hellem Soldatenzwillich durchzogen und die Länder mit dem papierweißen Arm der Verwaltung umschlangen. Und was für Länder! Gletscher und Meer, Karst und böhmische Kornfelder gab es dort, Nächte an der Adria, zirpend von Grillenunruhe, und slowakische Dörfer, wo der Rauch aus den Kaminen wie aus aufgestülpten Nasenlöchern stieg und das Dorf zwischen zwei kleinen Hügeln kauerte, als hätte die Erde ein wenig die Lippen geöffnet, um ihr Kind dazwischen zu wärmen (32-33).

Perhaps the defining quality of the misunderstood and already extinct state of Kakania was that it ensured purposefully a compromise between its rural and urban lifestyles and traditions, while Musil's use of the simple past in this account suggests that Ulrich's homeland exudes the quaintness of a fairy tale. There was speed, but not too much speed, a pace which allowed the state to maintain a reasonable degree of modern progress without threatening the traditions of the provinces. When those abroad thought of this land, images of wide, white and prosperous roads immediately came to mind, leading in all directions like rivers of order. The roads not only function as harbingers of industrialism, but Musil compares them to decorative ribbons on the bright ticking of a soldier's uniform, as they draw through and entwine the provinces in the name of Habsburg administration. The reference to ticking, a tightly woven and incredibly sturdy fabric often used for home furnishings, underscores the connection between the applied art of textile production and the imperial practice of reining in the provinces. What follows is a sweeping portrait of the Austro-Hungarian lands, from the dramatic glacial and seaside landscapes to the cozy Slovakian villages that come alive through their breathing chimneys, comforted by the mouth of Mother Earth. Musil's juxtaposition of such pleasingly gentle folk images with the strong arm of imperial rigor resonates strongly with Alois Riegl's call for industrialized cottage industries some decades earlier.

The presentation of Kakania shifts to a description of the government's ludicrously complex inner workings and the national struggles that often jammed the machinery of the state. It was, on the other hand, the most progressive state, however the world would never quite acknowledge this. As the chapter closes, the narrator concedes, "Ja, es war, trotz vielem, was dagegen spricht, Kakanien vielleicht doch ein Land für Genies; und wahrscheinlich ist es daran auch zugrunde gegangen" (35). Although none of the participants in the impending organization of the Parallel Action count as geniuses, many do fancy themselves to be among this illustrious grouping. As Musil relays critically their political discussions and aesthetic inclinations, he exposes the frail and shallow roots of the Kakanian cultural landscape. The country's picturesque canvas of dazzling Adriatic nights and earthy Bohemian fields of grain becomes unraveled as the haphazard designs of Austrian industrialism and imperial policy enact the daft and trivial concerns of bourgeois Vienna.

Before finally entering the world of the Parallel Action, Musil introduces the characters of Walter and Clarisse, a bourgeois Viennese couple forming the foundation of Ulrich's social circle and coming to symbolize an amalgamation of all *fin-de-siècle* aesthetic movements. Walter, Ulrich's best friend since childhood, is the embodiment of the multifaceted artistic "genius" inspired by his cultured Viennese upbringing; after their wedding, Clarisse, a hysterical Nietzschean, has despaired continuously over her husband's failure to be a true genius. Throughout the novel, Walter stumbles through a series of aesthetic crises, most of which concern the function of ornament and the meaning of applied arts objects. Walter and Clarisse make their first appearance in Chapter Fourteen, whereupon Ulrich decides to pay a regular visit to his "Jugendfreunde." He enters their home to find the pair at the piano, playing a triumphant rendition of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." The piano dominates their living space and is framed by pictures on the wall and the spindly lines of *Kunstfabrikmöbel*, a clear nod to the couple's allegiance to modernist interior design. Pinpointing Walter is a difficult task, even for his best friend Ulrich, yet he epitomizes indeed the Viennese Renaissance man/dilettante, dabbling in all sorts of creative realms and earning his income by means of a bureaucratic post:

Es wäre schwer zu sagen gewesen, was Walter wirklich war. Er war ein angenehmer Mensch mit sprechenden, gehaltvollen Augen, noch heute, soviel stand fest, obgleich er das veirunddreißigste Jahr schon überschritten hatte, und seit einiger Zeit war er in irgendeinem Kunstamt angestellt. Sein Vater hatte ihm diese bequeme Beamtenstellung verschafft und die Drohung damit verknüpft, daß er ihm seine Geldunterstützung entziehen werde, wenn er sie nicht annehme. Denn eigentlich war Walter Maler; er hatte gleichzeitig mit dem Kunstgeschichtsstudium an der Universität in einer Malklasse der Staatsakademie gearbeitet und später eine Zeitlang in einem Atelier gewohnt (50).

Walter has enjoyed acclaim as a musician, poet and hermit, among other things, although he does seem to be most drawn toward the visual arts. For some time now he has worked for some sort of governmental agency for the arts, and here Musil's imprecision highlights the ineffective multitude of such state endeavors. It was not even Walter's passion for art that led him to this career path; his father had procured him the position under the threat

that he would take away his son's financial support, which, presumably, has allowed Walter to continue his creative interests on the side. By stating that Walter was "actually" a painter, Musil mocks gently the amateur tendencies of modern artists to step outside the respective parameters of their fundamental training. Walter has completed a thorough study of the visual arts, as opposed to music or poetry. His coursework in Art History and Painting at the University of Vienna and the Academy of Fine Arts has given him the traditional foundations that he will fight against throughout the novel, while his stint living in an artist's studio has exposed him to contemporary trends in the practice and philosophy of aesthetic production. Although Musil parodies Walter as much as his other characters, it is important to note that Ulrich's best friend is indeed well-versed in the visual subjects he acts upon.

Walter enjoys the ideal conditions to pursue his artistic interests – a relatively quiet and laid-back work situation, a loving wife, and their house "am Rande der Einsamkeit." Despite these external factors and his own myriad attempts at self-motivation, Walter struggles intensively with a frustratingly stagnant period upon Ulrich's return to Vienna:

Walter schien nicht mehr arbeiten zu können; er verbarg und vernichtete...Er hatte hundert verschiedene Gründe dafür. Im ganzen begannen sich aber auch seine Anschauungen in dieser Zeit auffallend zu verändern. Er sprach nicht mehr von "Zeitkunst" und "Zukunftskunst," Vorstellungen, die für Clarisse seit ihrem fünfzehnten Jahre mit ihm verbunden waren, sondern zog irgendwo einen Strich – in der Musik etwa bei Bach, in der Dichtung bei Stifter, in der Malerei bei Ingres abschließend – und erklärte, daß alles, was später gekommen sei, überladen, entartet, überspitzt und abwärtsgerichtet wäre (52).

Clarisse's age is perhaps the most significant detail of this paragraph. The narrator has revealed earlier in the chapter that Clarisse married Walter three years ago at the age of twenty-two, making her twenty-five in the novel's present time of 1913; since she was fifteen years of age when Walter spoke to her about "Zeitkunst" and "Zukunftskunst," Musil places Walter's engagement with these discussions exactly one decade earlier, in 1903. That year marks the middle of the span chosen by Ludwig Hevesi in his 1908 collection of Berta Zuckermandl's writings on modern art – aptly entitled *Zeitkunst: Wien 1901-1907*. Walter's sudden abjuration of Viennese modernism bears similarities with (although is by no means dictated by) the minimalism advocated by Adolf Loos, yet he draws upon historical periods across the arts to attack all that is ornate, degenerate, exaggerated and misdirected about the current cultural moment. The affinities between the named historical figures and the layers of Ulrich's house are striking; the refined Baroque quality of Bach's music, the tidy Neo-classical brushstrokes of Ingres's painting, and the distinguished Biedermeier tone of Stifter's prose mirror the stylistic developments of the little chateau's superimposed structures and façades. Walter's disenchantment with the florid designs of the *Jugendstil* calls for a reconsideration of *fin-de-siècle* aesthetic ideals, especially given the unnamed yet distinctly inferable reference to Zuckermandl's body of criticism. In a sense, Walter exemplifies the disappointment of Zuckermandl's enthusiastic support of modern art and its sponsorship by imperial institutions in Vienna; his lackluster job at some sort of governmental arts agency signifies the dull reality of this endeavor,

while his position as both artist and bureaucrat gives him the authority to question the creation of “new art” within the auspices of the Kakanian state.

A more detailed critique of modern art emerges in the three chapters that follow, as Musil addresses the integration of aesthetic inclinations with everyday life that formed the crux of the Austro-Hungarian applied arts movement. By foregrounding in “Geistiger Umsturz” the tensions inherent in defining such trends, Musil comments on the major role that new aesthetics for life were to perform in shaping the lives of bourgeois subjects such as Walter and Ulrich. This phenomenon has been spreading feverishly throughout all of Europe, and its pronounced manifestation within Viennese circles proves to be unusually strong. Introducing the combative ethos responsible for the artistic trends that Walter has so adamantly disavowed, Musil writes:

Aus dem ölglatten Geist der zwei letzten Jahrzehnte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts hatte sich plötzlich in ganz Europa ein beflügelndes Fieber erhoben. Niemand wußte genau, ob es eine neue Kunst, ein neuer Mensch, eine neue Moral oder eine Umschichtung der Gesellschaft sein sollte. Darum sagte jeder davon, was ihm paßte. Aber überall standen Menschen auf, um gegen das Alte zu kämpfen. Allenthalben war plötzlich der rechte Mann zur Stelle; und was so wichtig ist, Männer mit praktischer Unternehmungslust fanden sich mit den geistig Unternehmungslustigen zusammen. Es entwickelten sich Begabungen, die früher erstickt worden waren oder am öffentlichen Leben gar nicht teilgenommen haben (55).

The “oil-smooth” spirit of the late nineteenth century evokes the old-fashioned techniques of realist painters that induced a number of internal revolts at the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts, resulting ultimately in the establishment of the Secession in 1897. Although impossible to characterize in a precise manner, these radical shifts impacted all realms of life, from the moral and the artistic to necessitating even the rearrangement of fundamental social structures. What remained clear throughout such movements, however, was that one had to rise up and fight against the old order. At the same time, it is of utmost importance to note that men drawn towards practical ventures found themselves collaborating with men of intellectual enterprise, a scheme that in turn encouraged the development of talents that had previously been suffocated or had not participated at all in public life. The merging of business, politics and creative concerns in such arrangements not only signifies the makeup of Musil’s fictitious planning committee for the Parallel Action, but it also reflects the organizational framework of those imperial offices dedicated to supporting the applied arts as a means of total life advancement.

Further down the same paragraph, Musil portrays this struggle as a montage that resonates strongly with the mission of the applied arts as delineated by Alois Riegl and favored by imperial policymakers:

[M]an träumte von alten Schloßalleen, herbstlichen Gärten, gläsernen Weihern, Edelsteinen, Haschisch, Krankheit, Dämonien, aber auch von Prärien, gewaltig Horizonten, von Schmiede- und Walzwerken, nackten Kämpfern, Aufständen der Arbeitssklaven, menschlichen Urpaaren und Zertrümmerung der Gesellschaft. Dies waren freilich Widersprüche und

höchst verschiedene Schlachtrufe, aber sie hatten einen gemeinsamen Atem; würde man jene Zeit zerlegt haben, so würde ein Unsinn herausgekommen sein wie ein eckiger Kreis, der aus hölzernem Eisen bestehen will, aber in Wirklichkeit war alles zu einem schimmernden Sinn verschmolzen (55).

This dream of modern man recounts the convoluted tensions at the *fin-de-siècle*, where the neat elegance of old palace alleys meets the sparkling of glassy ponds and gemstones alongside the wantonness of disease and demons. Musil proceeds to juxtapose these unsurprising images of European decadence with some less refined portraits of modernity. One also dreamt of the idyllic landscape of prairies and vast horizons, yet these rural scenes coincided with more violent fantasies as well: with its forges and steel mills, naked wrestlers and slave uprisings, the modern world promised a simultaneously devastating and primordial cacophony that would embrace the likes of imperial charm and industrial machinery. Even though the battle cries for the forging of newly conceived yet disparate lifestyles were highly contradictory, they shared a common breath of life. Musil notes that if one were to dissect this era, nonsense would emerge from it like a square circle wanting to be made from wooden iron; in its final reality, however, all of these jagged forms were fused together into a shimmering meaning. With this multilateral collision of industrial production and pastoral sensitivities, aristocratic landscapes and visceral relationships, the dreams of the new man reflect the aesthetic and economic transformations suggested within the pages of the *Kronprinzenwerk* and Riegl's theoretical writings at the close of the previous century. The new art thus illustrates a predilection for industrial crafts, functional objects that contain in their material essence all the paradoxes of the natural and social worlds, yet serve ultimately to unify their disparate elements.

Following this powerful attempt at defining the new art for the new man, Ulrich ponders the lull that has set in despite the provocative reconceptions of art that continue to crop up. Chapter Sixteen, "Eine geheimnisvolle Zeitkrankheit," finds Ulrich observing that the wider social sphere has received such trends to no avail: "Neues wird immer weiter gegründet; alle Welt besucht sowohl die Glaspaläste wie die Sezessionen und die Sezessionen der Sezessionen...[D]ie Staatsmänner zeigen sich gern in den Künsten der Kultur beschlagen, und die Zeitungen machen Literaturgeschichte. Was ist also abhanden gekommen?" (57). The entire world visits the crystal palaces, a patent reference to the series of World's Fairs that had taken place regularly since the 1851 Great Exhibition in London. The popular appeal of such events has also spilled over into the avant-garde exhibitions of the Secessionist movements as well as the secessions from the Secessions. Although the Secession once represented a radical break with the artistic establishment, it has turned into an established body of its own, necessitating further replications of its original intended purpose. Ulrich concludes this stream of thought by contemplating the burgeoning aesthetic inclinations of politicians and the press; statesmen enjoy showing off that they are well-versed in cultural matters while the newspapers take up the task of writing literary history. Such considerations also caused the ink to flow from Karl Kraus's pen, yet, despite poking fun at the Secession, Ulrich's questioning of the state of contemporary culture does not carry with it the same tone of derision as the Viennese satirical journalist. He asks rather what is missing from this seemingly dynamic era that has prevented it from substantial progress. The infiltration of glib politicians and

journalists into the aesthetic discourse of the avant-garde will function later in the novel as a catalyst for Musil's critique of modern design.

Walter's crisis intensifies in the following chapter, "Wirkung eines Mannes ohne Eigenschaften auf einen Mann mit Eigenschaften." Jealous of Clarisse's growing attachment to Ulrich, Walter, in light of his increasingly strained marriage, declares his childhood friend to be nothing more than "a man without qualities." Instead of approaching these disconcerting times with the same sense of objective exploration as Ulrich, Walter remains for the most part convinced that his own life possesses a greater sense of meaning due to his abundant qualities. Always having convinced himself to be capable of conquering others, including his wife, with extended monologues on the essential application of aesthetic discourse, he despairs of his present insecurities:

Mit dieser Eigenschaft, geistige Selbstbeschäftigung zu verbreiten, hatte er auch Clarisse erobert und mit der Zeit alle Mitbewerber aus dem Feld geschlagen; er konnte, weil ihm alles zu ethischer Bewegung wurde, überzeugend von der Unmoral des Ornaments, der Hygiene der glatten Form und dem Bierdunst der Wagnermusik sprechen, wie es dem neuen Kunstgeschmack entsprach, und selbst seinen zukünftigen Schwiegerpapa, der ein Malergehirn wie ein Pfauenrad hatte, setzte er damit in Schrecken. Es stand also außer Zweifel, daß Walter auf Erfolge zurückblicken durfte (60-61).

For Walter, discussions of art must include necessarily an element of moral authority. Musil invokes Adolf Loos in stating Walter's strict stance against ornament and insistence upon smooth and sanitized forms. His thorough understanding of the latest trends in art is so powerful that he has even succeeded in intimidating his father-in-law, an accomplished painter, into accepting their relevance. In comparing the painterly brain of Clarisse's father to the unfurled tail of a peacock, Musil alludes to the brightly colored, decorative palette favored by the previous generation, who would have been contemporaries with Gustav Klimt and the other artists of the original Viennese Secession. Although Walter can indeed be proud of his erudite and ethical approach to modern art, these convictions alone cannot secure his social standing and personal influence in a period of rapid transition. Musil thus utilizes the character of Ulrich's best friend to demonstrate that the practical application of aesthetic concerns is ultimately futile, providing an anchor neither for a man with qualities nor for the larger public bodies intent on guiding cultural progress.

Part I of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* concludes with Ulrich receiving a chiding letter from his father, requesting Ulrich's active participation in the Parallel Action, Austria's bid to outshine Germany on the concurrent occasion of that state's celebration of Emperor Wilhelm II's thirtieth year of reign and Emperor Franz Joseph's seventieth year on the throne in 1918. Even though this double jubilee for the German-speaking world is some five years away, a number of patriotic Austrians (reliving the collective trauma suffered from Habsburg defeat at the Battle of Königgrätz in 1866) are heavily concerned with the prospect of Prussia displaying its purported cultural, economic and political superiority over the Habsburg Monarchy, and therefore have galvanized a committee to venerate throughout 1918 their "Emperor of Peace" (*Friedenskaiser*). The farcical organization of the event will dominate the novel through the completion of Book One and

linger into Book Two, as Ulrich retreats into a mystical interior state. As the novel has unraveled the frayed patterns of decorative covers and tested the skeletal foundations of minimalism, Musil continues to dissect the intricate twine that distinguished early-twentieth-century Vienna by turning towards its bureaucratic machinery. There are many disparate forces involved in the orchestration of the Parallel Action. However, by isolating those discussions that mark the convergence of modern art, nationalist strife, and imperial cultural and economic policies, one may treat the fictitious event's affinities to the historical 1908 Jubilee in a more nuanced manner, and, more broadly, uncover implicit references to the Habsburg-sponsored applied arts program that permeated the empire's modern conception of itself.

In a scene that could just as well be from the times of Emperor Maximilian I and his advisors, Count Leinsdorf, the real driving force behind the Parallel Action, works closely with his secretary in drafting the campaign. The initial four points guiding the plan according to Leinsdorf will be the following: "Friedenskaiser, europäischer Markstein, wahres Österreich und Besitz und Bildung" (87) – with the latter concept playing an especially prominent role with regards to the combined economic and cultural function of the applied arts. Leinsdorf himself is the prototypical embodiment of the benevolent and liberal yet politically inactive aristocrat striving for the cause of the Dual Monarchy. In his knightly inclinations to help the poor, he is known to comment regularly, "[W]ir sind ja alle im Innersten Sozialisten" (90), a statement which reflects his naïve approach to smoothing over the divisive lines that block the imperial mission of cultural harmony. Musil explains the fusion of his intense patriotism and "socialist" leanings as follows: "Der wahre Adelige erschien ihm [Leinsdorf] darum so wichtig wie der wahre Handwerker, und die Lösung der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Fragen lief für ihn eigentlich auf eine harmonische Vision hinaus, die er Vaterland nannte" (90). By placing the aristocrat and the artisan at the same level, Leinsdorf elevates the status of craft to a position of high cultural and political import. In the same breath the narrator adds that for the Count, the solution to political and economic issues lies in the harmonious vision of an Austrian fatherland – a vision that the applied arts (as understood by Habsburg authorities) could very well accomplish through their utilization of fine artistry, folk traditions, and industrial methods to produce objects that would appeal to all of the empire's subjects, regardless of class or ethnic allegiances, and forge consequently a tangible medium for patriotic fervor.

The design of Leinsdorf's house embodies the ideals held so strongly by its resident, as it carries out a successful merging of aristocratic elegance and bourgeois comfort:

An der Grenze dieser beiden Welten zogen sich die spielerischen Ranken einer Rokokofassade hoch, die unter den Kunstgelehrten nicht nur wegen ihrer Schönheit berühmt war, sondern auch weil sie höher war als breit; sie gilt heute als der erste Versuch, die Haut eines breit bequemen Landschlößchens über das auf bürgerlich beengtem Grundriß hochgeratene Gerüst des Stadthauses zu spannen, und damit als einer der wichtigsten Übergänge von der feudalen Grundherrlichkeit zum Stil der bürgerlichen Demokratie. Hier ging die Existenz der Leinsdorfs kunstbücherlich beglaubigt in den Weltgeist über (90-91).



The residence occupies a significant turning point in the annals of Art History, as the subdued quality of the city structure tames the ornate intricacies of its Rococo façade, thus ensuring the Leinsdorf family's appearance as nobles with a progressive social consciousness. Musil, however, reveals immediately the irony of such grandiose claims by offering the perspective of the average passerby: "Wer das aber nicht wußte, sah so wenig davon wie der vorüberschießende Wassertropfen von der Wand seines Kanals (91)." In comparing an encounter with this groundbreaking architectural style to the murky and trivial observation of a drop of water as it slides over a canal wall, Musil undermines the greater social potential of design, ridiculing the assumption that the construction of a more "democratic" aesthetic will have any realistic effect on those people it claims to include. The well-meaning yet naïve intentions represented by Count Leinsdorf suggest that the welding of liberal imperial ideology with the aesthetic of a profound yet highly livable space is futile in its aspirations to both contain and promote cultural unity. From this introduction of the Parallel Action's aristocratic leader, Musil demonstrates the inextricable bonds that fuse together the discourses of aesthetic progress and social democracy as they strive to create a functional forum for intercultural harmony in the Habsburg state.

Ermelinda Tuzzi is Ulrich's distant cousin, the wife of Hans Tuzzi, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a very close friend of Count Leinsdorf. Also known throughout the novel as Diotima on account of her "high-minded beauty" (*geistige Schönheit*), she represents the vivacious female personalities behind Vienna's lively salon culture of the *fin-de-siècle*. While Karl Corino argues that Musil modeled Diotima most closely on Dr. Eugenie Schwarzwald, the philanthropist and progressive reformer of girls' education, her character is indeed a synthesis of several influential bourgeois women, among them Schwarzwald, Alma Mahler-Werfel and Berta Zuckermandl.<sup>7</sup> In taking into consideration Schwarzwald's employment of Oskar Kokoschka and Adolf Loos at her school for girls as well Zuckermandl's involvement with both the contemporary arts and imperial politics, Diotima's position as the primary director of the Parallel Action's cultural component discloses the close relationship between arts education and governmental practices in the Habsburg state.

Musil introduces the concept of "Capital and Culture" (*Besitz und Bildung*) in Chapter Twenty-Four, and defines carefully what exactly "culture" conveys to Diotima for the grander scale of the Parallel Action. For Count Leinsdorf, this initiative should stress the significant role that every man can play in shaping Austria's progressive future: "Er vertrat die Auffassung, daß jede Leistung – nicht nur die eines Beamten, sondern ebensogut die eines Fabrikarbeiters oder eines Konzertsängers – ein Amt darstelle. 'Jeder Mensch' pflegte er zu sagen 'besitzt ein Amt im Staate; der Arbeiter, der Fürst, der Handwerker sind Beamte!'" (101). It is striking that the aristocrat makes an adamant case for the necessary inclusion of everyone from the prince to the artisan in the bureaucratic mechanism that produces imperial culture. This industrialized paradigm provides a practical counterpart to Diotima's lofty vision of the cultural unity brought about by the finest examples of aesthetic production:

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<sup>7</sup> Karl Corino, *Robert Musil: Leben und Werk in Bildern und Texten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1988) 364-366.

Und im Grunde entspringt auch wirklich alle solche gewaltsame Geselligkeit wie die bei ihr, wenn sie nicht ganz naiv und roh ist, dem Bedürfnis, eine menschliche Einheit vorzutäuschen, welche die so sehr verschiedenen menschlichen Betätigungen umfassen soll und niemals vorhanden ist. Diese Täuschung nannte Diotima Kultur und gewöhnlich mit einem besonderen Zusatz die alte österreichische Kultur... Sie verstand darunter: Die schönen Bilder von Velasquez und Rubens, die in den Hofmuseen hingen. Die Tatsache, daß Beethoven sozusagen ein Österreicher gewesen ist. Mozart, Haydn, den Stefansdom, das Burgtheater. Das von Traditionen schwere höfische Zeremoniell. Den ersten Bezirk, wo sich die elegantesten Kleider- und Wäschegeschäfte eines Fünfzigmillionenreichs zusammengedrängt hatten... Den Adel, der sich nächst dem englischen für den vornehmsten hielt, und seine alten Paläste (101).

The narrator derides the proposition that this understanding of culture can lead to human unity, although it does indeed spring from the need for such illusions. Unlike Leinsdorf, Diotima does not include the artisan in this list of contributors to Austrian culture; in the world of the salon hostess, the most elite social groups are responsible for exemplary cultural achievement. The inclusion of these divergent perspectives in the promotional campaign of “Capital and Culture” alludes to the noble aspirations of the bourgeoisie to enter into the realm of imperial politics as well as the somewhat naïve attempts of the nobility to embrace the common man. Although Musil clearly depicts such trains of thought with a satirical flourish, this union of high and popular culture resonates significantly with the combined aesthetic and economic mission of the imperial design program. The very catchphrase of *Besitz und Bildung* evokes the title of Berta Zuckerkandl’s series of essays on “Kunst und Kultur,” a further suggestion of *fin-de-siècle* discourses on the intersection of public access to the arts and programs to unify the Habsburg state.

With his keenness for egalitarianism, Leinsdorf suggests that the meetings of the Parallel Action take place in Diotima’s modern salon as opposed to his grand aristocratic residence (although, in reality, he is more concerned with keeping the nobility’s profile discreetly out of public view). Musil himself was no stranger to the Viennese salon; during the interwar period, he visited Eugenie Schwarzwald’s salon (designed by Adolf Loos) on a regular basis,<sup>8</sup> and his detailed observations of the social preparations and spatial arrangements that go into organizing such venues are, perhaps consequentially, quite astute. Diotima is determined to convince her husband that her salon is by no means a frivolous endeavor – a toy, even – and Leinsdorf grants her the perfect opportunity to prove her ability to bring together the worlds of art and politics. As Diotima prepares herself intellectually and emotionally to host the first meeting of the Parallel Action, she fantasizes about the worldly forces about to flood her drawing room:

Se. Erlaucht [Leinsdorf] hatte ihr vertraut, daß die große patriotische Aktion eine krönende Idee brauche, und es war ihr brennender Ehrgeiz, sie zu finden. Die Vorstellung, mit den Mitteln eines ganzen Reichs und vor den

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<sup>8</sup> Corino 368.

aufmerksamen Augen der Welt etwas verwirklichen zu müssen, was einer der größten Kulturinhalte sein sollte, oder bescheidener eingeschränkt, vielleicht etwas, das die österreichische Kultur in ihrem innersten Wesen zeigen sollte, – diese Vorstellung wirkte auf Diotima, als ob die Türe ihres Salons aufgesprungen wäre und an die Schwelle schlüge wie eine Fortsetzung seines Fußbodens das unendliche Meer (107).

With the means of an entire empire and the eyes of the world watching attentively, Diotima burns to discover the crowning idea that will unveil the essence of Austrian culture. This great patriotic campaign will flood her salon, and the hostess imagines the doors to her salon springing open, her drawing room floor extending into the unending sea. The world, the Austrian Empire, and the finest manifestation of Viennese culture collide in a space made possible by interior designers and bourgeois finances. Although the Parallel Action never actually transpires in the novel, the planning of it utilizes the bourgeois interiors made sophisticated by the likes of Josef Hoffmann or Adolf Loos as well as the political acknowledgement that the Habsburg Empire needs a modern and dynamic unifying principle to ensure its continued existence. Combined with the fact that discussions surrounding the Parallel Action, an industrialized reworking of the classical imperial spectacle, will take place in a modern and non-aristocratic space, Diotima's fantasy thus encompasses the projections thrown into the imperial government's promotion of the applied arts.

In Chapter Forty-One, "Rachel und Diotima," the Tuzzi house seems to be imbued with all the complex scents of the art and industry debate. Just before the planning committee assembles for their first meeting, a description of Diotima's dining room, transformed into a conference room for the occasion, emphasizes the awkward juxtaposition of modern design and imperial patriotism that defines the Parallel Action:

Der Eßtisch stand, auseinandergezogen und mit grünem Tuch beschlagen, in der Mitte des Raums...Die Ecken des Raums standen leer und streng. Die Wände waren ehrfürchtig kahl, bis auf ein Bild Seiner Majestät, das Diotima hingehängt hatte, und jenes einer Dame mit Schnürleib, das Herr Tuzzi als Konsul einst von irgendwo heimgebracht hatte, obgleich es ebensogut als das Bild einer Ahnin gelten durfte. Am liebsten hätte Diotima noch ein Kruzifix an das Kopfende des Tisches gestellt, aber Sektionschef Tuzzi hatte sie ausgelacht...(163).

The decorative touches of Josef Hoffmann's glass vases or Michael Powolny's ceramic *putti* are conspicuously absent from the room's empty corners, while its basic arrangement bears the markers of Loos's minimalist design. The walls are dignifiedly bare, save for a portrait of a lady brought home by Mr. Tuzzi and a portrait of Franz Joseph that Diotima has decided to hang. If her husband had not made fun of her, she would have also hung a crucifix at the head of the table. The initially serious image of the stark space becomes ridiculous at the very mention of Diotima's decision to display the two traditional figureheads of Austrian culture – the Habsburg Emperor and the Catholic Church. At the same time, however, Diotima's last-minute attempt at interior design reflects the company to be present at the first meeting: "[G]etreu dem gräflich Leindorfschen Grundsatz 'Besitz

und Bildung' Vertreter der Hochschulen, der Kunstvereinigungen, der Industrie, des bodenständigen Hausbesitzes und der Kirche wurden erwartet" (163). The inclusive principle behind Leinsdorf's slogan means that the Parallel Action will represent the interests of all sectors of Viennese society, from the modern associations of art and industry to the age-old institutions of landowners and the Church.

Musil follows this caricatured tableau by introducing Rachel, Diotima's young Jewish maid from the exotic crown land of Galicia. The figure of Rachel (called "Rachelle" by her mistress) provides an insight into the folk cultures of those most foreign territories of the empire, embodying in many respects the same mystical quality drafted by Oskar Kokoschka in his submission for the 1908 Jubilee poster competition. After giving birth to an illegitimate child, Rachel has traveled great distances to the imperial capital, where fate has brought her to Diotima and the world of the Parallel Action:

Rachel war neunzehn Jahre alt und glaubte an Wunder. Sie war in einer häßlichen Hütte in Galizien geboren worden, wo an dem Türpfosten der Thorastreifen hing und der Fußboden Spalten hatte, durch die Erde heraufquoll... Und Rachel war gereist; unter dem schmutzigen Holzkasten, in dem sie fuhr, rollte die Verzweiflung mit; leergeweint, sah sie die Hauptstadt, zu der sie, von irgendeinem Instinkt getrieben, flüchtete, nur wie eine große Feuerwand vor sich, in die sie sich stürzen wollte, um zu sterben. Aber, o echtes Wunder, diese Wand teilte sich und nahm sie auf... Der Zufall hatte sie in das Haus Diotimas geführt, und diese hatte es sehr natürlich gefunden, daß man aus einem galizischen Elternhaus entliefe, wenn man dadurch zu ihr gekommen war (164).

In this passage the narrator declines to conjure up any quaint associations with folk culture or the earthy warmth emitted by provincial roots. The reference to Rachel's birthplace as an "ugly hut" in Galicia begs for a comparison to Kraus's account of the "ugly" provinces that have come to Vienna as participants in the Jubilee parade. The image of her family's hut, with a mezuzah hanging on the doorpost and earth seeping through the floor cracks, and her fervent belief in miracles also invokes stereotypes of the *Ostjude* – a religious culture that differs significantly in both mentality and outward appearance from the assimilated bourgeois lifestyles of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese Jewry. The instinctive manner with which Rachel finds herself driven to Vienna and, by chance, serving Diotima, highlights the almost mystical magnetism of the imperial capital. Diotima finds it only natural that the young woman should have fled her parent's poverty in Galicia and come to her, an elegant lady of good taste and sophistication. The mistress even goes as far as to revel in making the young girl privy to the classified details of the Parallel Action, as it brings Diotima pure joy to see Rachel's starry eyes reflect her own grandiose self-image: "es [war] eine Freude..., sich an Rachels Augensternen zu weiden, die bei jeder Mitteilung flammten und goldenen Spiegeln glichen, die das Bild der Herrin strahlend zurückwarfen" (164). The notion of orchestrating such star-struck provincial responses to the style and savoir-faire of a cosmopolitan lifestyle mirrors the process of transforming folk art into a vehicle for modernization. This intimate glimpse into Rachel and Diotima's relationship illuminates the intersection of the folk and the imperial, the jagged seams of which the Parallel Action will attempt to gloss over. By detailing the putrid conditions of Rachel's

Galician roots directly after describing the clean lines of Diotima's salon, Musil builds the imperial applied arts discourse into the very space that the organization of the Parallel Action will inhabit.

The first big meeting of the planning committee takes place in the following chapter, perhaps the only accomplishment of which is Count Leinsdorf's proposed method of uniting the empire on the popular front:

‘Wir dürfen nicht vergessen, daß der hochherzige Entschluß Sr. Majestät, dem Volk ein gewisses Mitbestimmungsrecht in seinen Angelegenheiten zu schenken, noch nicht so lange her ist, daß auch schon überall jene politische Reife hätte eintreten können, welche in jeder Hinsicht des von höchster Stelle großmütig entgegengebrachten Vertrauens würdig erscheint. Man wird also nicht, wie das mißgünstige Ausland, in solchen an sich verdammungswürdigen Erscheinungen, wie wir sie leider mitmachen, ein greisenhaftes Zeichen der Auflösung zu erblicken haben, sondern weit eher ein Zeichen noch nicht reifer, darum unverwüsthlicher Jugendkraft des österreichischen Volks!’...Er wiederholte dann nur noch einmal, daß eine solche urwüchsige Kraftleistung wirklich aus der Mitte des Volks kommen und deshalb von oben geleitet werden müsse, wozu die Wege zu finden, eben diese Versammlung berufen sei (171).

In accordance with Leinsdorf's distinctively Austrian socialist-aristocratic deals, he believes it is of utmost importance that the Parallel Action be a forum for the popular voice. He preaches optimistically that the current (and rather lamentable) demonstrations of national consciousness are in actuality mere signs of the immature and youthful strength of the Austrian people, despite what the international community may interpret to be vital threats to the monarchy's existence. The organizers of the Parallel Action need to discover a way to channel this exuberant energy into an event that makes manifest the egalitarian spirit of the multiethnic empire, yet the immaturity of some groups in the Habsburg state necessitates that the endeavor be directed from above. This strategy follows the same pattern as the imperial propagation of the applied arts, from the institutional foundations of that scheme to the transcultural coordination of the 1908 Jubilee. As the planning sessions for the “Austrian Year” of 1918 continue throughout *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, issues of presenting visually both the modern artistry and cultural traditions of the empire will play an increasingly complex and parodic role.

Ulrich, appointed Secretary of the Parallel Action committee, absorbs the discourse of design as a means for cultural unity through both his professional and personal circles. As Ulrich's relationship with his cousin-cum-colleague Diotima intensifies, the novel simultaneously unlocks and sneers at the social potential of the applied arts. Diotima is determined that the Austrian Year reflect Austria's key function in guiding the ideals of European universalism – a position that mirrors Berta Zuckerkandl's high opinion of Austrian culture, both in her art criticism and in her autobiography. One of the salon hostess's more extravagant ideas for displaying Austria's inherent universality is to have leading artists paint murals on the walls of the Peace Palace in The Hague (228), a

suggestion that reaches back to the notion of decorative art as a non-violent medium of promoting cultural harmony in an increasingly divided Europe. In Chapter Sixty-Seven, entitled simply “Diotima and Ulrich,” the two cousins make a point of making excursions into the Austrian cultural landscape in order to gain inspiration for the larger organization of their patriotic aspirations within the parameters of the Parallel Action. These expeditions begin with the understanding that they will include the Prussian industrialist Arnheim and impress him with “die Schönheiten der Umgebung Wiens” (277), although those joint outings fade out quickly and Diotima and Ulrich embark on tourist adventures in their own homeland. What ensues, however, is a lucid survey of the urban imperial sphere, from the High Baroque to the Neo-classical to the most modern:

Solche Ausfahrten dienten nicht nur dem Vergnügen, sondern hatten auch den Zweck, um die Teilnahme einflußreicher oder wohlhabender Personen an dem vaterländischen Unternehmen zu werben, und fanden noch öfter in der städtischen Bannmeile statt als über Land. Die beiden Verwandten sahen gemeinsam viel Schönes; Maria-Theresien-Möbel, Barockpaläste, ... neuzeitliche Häuser mit großen Zimmerfluchten, Bankpaläste und die Mischung spanischer Strenge mit den Lebensgewohnheiten des Mittelstands in den Wohnungen hoher Staatsdiener... Diotima war entzückt von so viel “Kultur;” sie hatte immer gewußt, daß ihre Heimat solche Schätze berge, aber das Ausmaß überraschte selbst sie (277-278).

In this passage different stylistic moments intersect to establish Austria’s prime cultural legacy as one strikingly reliant upon the seamless shifting of trends in interior design. The positive rendering of this inherited collection recalls Riegl’s sentiments in *Stilfragen*; the narrator does not privilege one style or epoch over another, and their coexistence at different points in history evokes the peaceful possibility of socio-aesthetic harmony. Diotima is overwhelmed that her homeland can claim such abundant treasures as its own – although her scope is admittedly quite limited, as she and Ulrich have probably not even ventured beyond the Vienna Woods during these jaunts. In the cousins’ attempts to widen their appreciation of Kakania’s cultural offerings, their lack of geographical breadth (unlike the massive *Kronprinzenwerk*, for example) results in a mockery of their naïveté, particularly on the part of Diotima, the self-proclaimed “cultural soul” of the Parallel Action. Musil’s references, however, to the furniture produced under Maria Theresa’s reign and “bank palaces” resonate strongly with notions of traditional Austrian imperial structures and the fusion of art and industry in modern spaces of commerce (such as those Otto Wagner’s *Postsparkasse*). The centrality of design thus emerges in this chapter at the spilling over of Ulrich’s professional work into his personal pleasures, with the medium of interior design suggesting ultimately an individual life aesthetic that permeates and then dissolves the perceived boundaries between the old and the new, the imperial and the popular. In acting as a coalescing agent, Diotima and Ulrich’s encounter with the history of Austrian (i.e., Viennese) design brings together the utopian arguments of Riegl and Zuckerkandl with the archival drives of both the former’s curatorial work and the *Kronprinzenwerk*, all in the name of unveiling the progressive trajectories of the supranational Habsburg state.

This transitional episode featuring Ulrich and his cousin is soon followed by Clarisse visiting in an attempt to convince the Parallel Action secretary to include her father, that artist with the mind of an unfurled peacock tail, in the grand imperial gesture. This request for what is, in essence, an imperial patron of the arts echoes the close (and highly turbulent) relationship between Habsburg commissions and modern artists (most notably Gustav Klimt) of late-nineteenth-century Vienna. Musil gives this discussion in Chapter Seventy an almost comedic setting, as the utterly mad character of Clarisse fancies herself a diplomatic spokesperson for the embarrassingly desperate professional circumstances of her father. The scene between the two characters does, however, present a rather striking debate on the role of the artist, an individual whose work is contingent upon both the bourgeois market and the latest aesthetic theories of his intellectual peers. Clarisse's father, the well-known painter van Helmond, specializes in redesigning the interiors of old palaces, a trade that emphasizes the social connections of the Viennese art scene. Clarisse explains carefully to Ulrich the significance of her father's work and the larger role of decorative beauty within the bourgeois circles of the imperial capital:

‘Kannst du dir etwas vorstellen, wenn ich Schönheitsarzt sage? Ein Maler ist ein Schönheitsarzt.’ Ulrich begriff; er kannte das Haus ihrer Eltern. ‘Also dunkel, vornehm, prächtig, üppig, gepolstert, bewimpelt und bewedelt!’ fuhr sie fort. ‘Papa ist Maler, der Maler ist eine Art Schönheitsarzt, und mit uns zu verkehren, hat in der Gesellschaft immer für ebenso schick gegolten wie eine Badereise anzutreten. Du verstehst. Und eine Haupteinnahme Papas bildet seit je die Einrichtung von Palästen und Landschlössern...’ (291).

Clarisse speaks with a tone of deluded authority, while Ulrich nods along knowingly to her spouting out of a loose association of interior design concepts, notions that in turn form her point of departure for a treatise on the artist as a sort of cosmetic surgeon. Although assigning the title of “doctor” to the painter gives his profession a certain amount of clout, the emphasis is on external beauty as opposed to the inner circulatory workings of the life system. With this attempt at a serious formulation by the mentally unstable character of Clarisse, Musil exposes the lack of visceral substance to these heavy-handed debates, criticizing both the superficial aesthetic enterprises of the bourgeois sphere and the notion that artistic trends should shape people's private and public lives. According to Clarisse, the painter, in addition to embellishing flat surfaces, is also responsible for upholstering and affixing pennants and tassels – decorative tasks that add notable accents to the social space that is the drawing room. To visit with Clarisse's family is just as fashionable as going on a spa holiday, highlighting the centrality of the decorative arts in the lives of bourgeois subjects. Her father the “beauty doctor” has until this point been quite successful in receiving commissions from the likes of both noblemen and the upper middle classes; the growing popularity of anti-ornamentalism has, however, jeopardized his livelihood, and Clarisse hopes the moderately liberal (i.e. not too radical) tendencies of the Parallel Action will give her father (of the Klimt-generation) the opportunity to reemerge as a significant public artist.

Clarisse then discusses the difficult relationship between her father and her husband, Walter. Although, Clarisse argues adamantly, Walter has always secretly adored her father, their aesthetic allegiances have made both sides pursue an antagonistic edge

against one another. Earlier in the novel, when the narrator first introduces these two men in Clarisse's life, it is clear that Walter's tastes have progressed to the point of even questioning the radically new principles of Adolf Loos, whereas his father-in-law continues to make full use of a brightly colored palette with ornamental flourishes. In its reiteration of these debates through Clarisse's hysteric voice, the following passage mocks the superficial convictions of such visually-inclined figures:

‘Damals gab es den Impressionismus. Papa malte altmodisch-musikalisch, wie er noch heute tut, braune Soße mit Pfauenschwänzen. Aber Walter war für freie Luft, klarlinige englische Gebrauchsformen, das Neue und Ehrliche. Papa mochte ihn insgeheim so wenig ausstehen wie eine protestantische Predigt... Walter dagegen liebte heimlich Papa, das habe ich schon gesagt; aber er mußte ihn öffentlich verachten, wegen der neuen Kunstrichtung...’ (292).

The confrontation between Clarisse's father's Impressionistic endeavors and Walter's "new" and "honest" preference for clear-lined and practical forms alludes to the key stylistic debates of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, described already in detail in "Geistiger Umsturz." Walter favors a functional approach to artistic production, deriding the attempts of artists like his father-in-law to render beautiful such ludicrous subjects as gravy and peacocks' tails, which then ostensibly graced the interiors of many a bourgeois home. Clarisse admits that her father could stand Walter about as much as a Protestant sermon, a statement which sets up a further opposition between the Baroque excess of Catholic Austria and the clean and simplified lines of modern industrialism. Walter, on the other hand, does admire this artist of the previous generation, yet his polemical stance, clearly inspired by Loos's own historical persona, precludes the younger man's public appreciation of someone whose work relies so heavily upon its emphasis on ornament. With this portrait of the fussy social tensions constructed by *fin-de-siècle* aesthetic discourses, Musil critiques the inherent frivolity of such figures in their drastic disregard of one another on the superficial basis of style. At the same time, however, these discourses are extremely important as the bourgeois sector defines itself in such highly visual terms – whether presented by the decadent upholstery found in their drawing rooms or the hygienic geometry of their cigarette cases. As the Parallel Action is primarily a noble and bourgeois undertaking on behalf of all imperial denizens, the sense of urgency communicated in this private conversation between Ulrich and Clarisse appeals to the very real significance of modern visual displays in delineating a suitable life aesthetic for the empire.

Before the planning committee deals with concrete examples of Kakania's self-presentation, a number of avant-garde artists gather at Diotima's to discuss in vain the more serious implications of artistic production. There is a general concurrence that a radically new art must be on the horizon, one that engages seriously with the social concerns of the greater public. The painting styles of the late nineteenth century proved to be weak and mindless, although the questions raised by this new collective of more spiritual artists are, in fact, equally inane: "Aus der Frage, ob ein Kunstwerk oder die Not zehntausender Menschen wichtiger sei, wurde die Frage, ob zehntausend Kunstwerke die Not eines einzigen Menschen aufwiegen?" (403). This younger generation has given birth to a sense of urgent activism, yet its members are unsure of how to pursue a less self-



important artistic strategy for the welfare of those under the representative paradigm of the Parallel Action. A reasonable interjection cuts through the passionate voices of the group, which have been booming out from all corners of Diotima's simple yet tastefully designed salon: "Eine Kompromißstimme erinnerte darahn, daß das beste Mittel gegen die Selbstüberschätzung in der Kunst eine gesunde handwerkliche Basis sei" (403). This reminder suggests that a healthy grounding in craftsmanship is the best means with which to promote a genuinely egalitarian relationship between the object and its consumer, the artist and the common man. Although the tone of this debate has been rather lofty and ungrounded in its pseudo-philosophical musings, the proposition that the artist should return to his artisanal roots in order to carry out the highly visual displays of the Parallel Action echoes the planning of the 1908 Jubilee on a number of levels (albeit with a tinge of socialist tendencies). In its deployment of artists and students at applied arts institutions throughout the empire, that historical event aimed to design a tangible image of cultural unity at the popular level. The Parallel Action caters to precisely the same goal, although by the time of that committee's onset in 1913, the applied arts program had already faltered publicly on the stage of the Ringstraße five years earlier.

Following this closed discussion in Diotima's salon, the police invite the key members of the Parallel Action planning committee, along with all other members of high society, to the opening of their jubilee exhibition. The attendees agree that the exhibition is a tremendous success in its display of photographic evidence, weapons and mementos of tragic stories. In his opening speech, the ministerial head of the police force invokes the portraits of the most illustrious policemen on display, contending that these upright men of authority illustrate the true essence of the people:

[Er] wies in seiner Eröffnungsansprache auf diese Darstellungen hin, die den Geist der Polizei als etwas wahrhaft Volkstümliches zeigten, und nannte die Bewunderungen für solchen Geist der Hilfsbereitschaft und Strenge einen Jungbrunnen der Moral, in einer Zeit, wo Kunst und Leben nur zu sehr zum feigen Kultus sinnlicher Sorglosigkeit neigen. Diotima, die neben Graf Leinsdorf stand, fühlte sich in ihren Bestrebungen zur Förderung moderner Kunst beunruhigt... (446).

The Minister's attack on modern art allows for a digression in which the narrator considers the relationship between art and the modern imperial state on a global scale. While Italy wages military campaigns in Libya, and Germany and England have problems in Baghdad, Kakania is making preparations to ensure that Serbia not expand to the sea. Musil juxtaposes these complex issues of colonial rule with a lengthy description of a doll house, made by a famous architect to entertain the Queen of England. Here Musil also plays with the narrative of time, as he invokes Austria's postimperial condition by referring undoubtedly to the actual "Queen Mary's Dolls' House," designed by the great British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens and completed in 1924 for display at the British Empire Exhibition in 1924-25.<sup>9</sup> The prospect of such a toy distracts the narrative from the actual content of the police exhibition and the political violence of the present day:

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<sup>9</sup> The Austrian reception of Queen Mary's Dolls' House is a fascinating subject in its own right, as Princess Marie Louise, goddaughter of the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1921 to build the doll house for her cousin, the British Queen and wife of King George V. Lutyens, trained in

In England zum Beispiel hatte man etwas weit Großartigeres, wovon man sich hier in der Gesellschaft viel erzählte; ein Puppenhaus, das der Königin geschenkt worden, von einem berühmten Architekten erbaut, mit einem Speisesaal von einem Meter Länge, worin Miniaturporträts von berühmten modernen Malern hingen, Stuben, in denen warmes und kaltes Wasser aus Hähnen floß, und einer Bibliothek, mit einem kleinen Buch, das ganz aus Gold war, worein die Königin die Photographien der königlichen Familie klebte, einem mikroskopisch gedruckten Eisenbahn- und Schiffskursbuch und an die zwei hundert winzigen Bändchen, in die berühmte Autoren mit eigener Hand Gedichte und Geschichten für die Königin geschrieben hatten (448).

This doll house is far more spectacular and relevant than a jubilee celebration of Viennese police memorabilia – and most members of that society are fully aware of the exciting possibilities that this toy abode contains within its small-scale walls. Its design and miniature portraits by famous modernist painters are highly reminiscent of the Wiener Werkstätte doll houses on display in another jubilee exhibition, namely the *Kunstschau 1908*. Instead of being merely a reflection of traditional English royal residences, the architect has allowed the Queen to play with the most modern of conveniences (temperature-controlled running water, photographs of the royal family) as well as traditional objects of imperial luxury (a book entirely out of gold, two hundred volumes of hand-written verse in honor of the Queen herself). She also has at her disposal microscopically printed railway and shipping schedules, a clear indicator of the British Empire's triumphant ventures in imperial expansion through industrial enterprise on both land and at sea. Housed together in a sleek modern design, these accessories symbolize the merger of art and industry in the age of imperialism; this English doll house thus epitomizes the power of the applied artist in constructing originally conceived objects that make transparent the intertwined discourses of modern creativity and the forceful politics of imperial reign.

Diotima owns the two-volume deluxe edition of the English monograph on the doll house, a rare item which has become a favorite possession to show off to those visiting her salon. The popularity of this toy for the British monarch among the liberal Viennese bourgeoisie, particularly those involved in organizing the Parallel Action, stresses the Austrian yearning to find an imaginative and productive forum through which to express the progressive policies and impressive aesthetic culture of the multiethnic Habsburg state. The desire to emulate the British also resonates with Walter's Loosian preferences for clean-lined and practical objects for everyday use, thereby tying together Austria's imperial aspirations with the highly provocative voices of its modernist craftsmen. The reality of Kakanian, however, is not the deceptively neat doll house that characterized the British Empire. Musil continues with the theme of design and presents the Dual Monarchy as a mismatched jacket and pair of trousers:

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South Kensington (present-day Royal College of Art), enlisted top British designers and authors (including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, J.M. Barrie and Rudyard Kipling) to contribute to this massive undertaking in miniature – a playful take on the “empire and design” discourse in its British incarnation.

Die beiden Teile Ungarn und Österreich paßten zu einander wie eine rot-weiß-grüne Jacke zu einer schwarz-gelben Hose; die Jacke war ein Stück für sich, die Hose aber war der Rest eines nicht mehr bestehenden schwarz-gelben Anzugs, der im Jahre achtzehnhundertsiebenundsechzig zertrennt worden war. Die Hose Österreich hieß seither in der amtlichen Sprache "Die im Reichsrath vertretenen Königreiche und Länder," was natürlich gar nichts bedeutete und ein Name aus Namen war, denn auch diese Königreiche, zum Beispiel die ganz Shakespeareschen Königreiche Lodomerien und Illyrien gab es längst nicht mehr und hatte es schon damals nicht mehr gegeben, als noch ein ganzer schwarz-gelber Anzug vorhanden war (451).

The red, white and green jacket denotes the Hungarian national flag, while the black and yellow trousers signify the traditional colors of the Habsburg Empire. The jacket was a clothing piece in its own right, but the trousers belonged to a full suit, the other parts of which have been lost since the Compromise of 1867. Although the basis for Austria still exists both in the form of an official name and in the fundamental dressing of the lower body, some of the lands, including Lodomeria and Illyria, have not been called as such since the times of Shakespeare and the full black and gold ensemble, at which point their mere existence was already an antiquated concept. This suit scrapped together from drab Austrian trousers and a colorful Hungarian jacket is thus representative of the aesthetic incongruities that illustrated the empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like the imperial endeavor of transforming disparate folk motifs into a singular design object, the Austro-Hungarian suit is a pathetic attempt to match the inherently clashing visualities of two very different cultures. Furthermore, the anachronistic, almost mythical, naming of Habsburg-administered territories suggests the cultural stragglers of Loos's "Ornament and Crime" essay; by dressing as if they were from another time, such people only undermine the goal of a unified aesthetic that will ensure a successful cultural and economic transition for the Habsburg Empire into a dynamic modern state. After these detailed descriptions of the extraordinary doll house of the British Empire and the clashing uniform of Austria-Hungary, the chapter closes with Count Leinsdorf brimming with political anxiety at the police exhibition, overwhelmed to the point of paralysis by thoughts of pursuing applied artistic production for the Parallel Action. Although the specific images of that more prolific empire's doll house and the ludicrous complexities of his own come to mind, these concerns of empire and design coalesce into a dark and heady cloud that will direct the head of the planning committee into a blurred oblivion for the remainder of the novel.

Shortly after the exhibition opening, Ulrich's father passes away and the second book of the novel commences. While the second, highly fragmentary volume deals primarily with Ulrich's reunion and mystical love affair with his long-lost sister Agathe, the Parallel Action fades out of significance for its secretary. There are, however, two significant moments in Book Two that will bring this discussion of Musil's meditations on designing the Habsburg Empire to a close. The whirling visions of the British Queen's doll house and the patchy fabric of Austrian identity that possess Count Leinsdorf at the police exhibition lead the campaign's noble leader to reconsider the program of "Capital and Culture." A demonstration (led by Walter) waged outside of Leinsdorf's home has thrown

him into a total state of despair as to the future direction of the Parallel Action. In “Graf Leinsdorf zweifelt an Besitz und Bildung,” a long-absent Ulrich visits the Count in his study, only to receive a pragmatic account of the volatile state of Kakanian ethnic affairs. Leinsdorf has decided to do away with the promotion of a universal Austrian “culture” in the campaign, as he admits that for decades it has not been pulling its weight alongside “capital.”<sup>10</sup> As a prelude to his argument in favor of the financial aspirations of the Parallel Action, he contends somewhat paradoxically that cultural assimilation (in the same vein as Diotima’s whimsical assertion of a European universality) has damaged all prospects of cultural harmony among the diverse peoples of the Habsburg Empire. An increasingly frantic Leinsdorf brings up the “so-called Jewish question” in proposing that individual groups assert their cultural traditions within the imperial capital – an impulse that resonates spectacularly with the 1908 Jubilee as well as pedagogies of folk art:

‘Ich gebe zu, daß ein soeben erst bei uns reich gewordener Galizianer im Steireranzug mit Gamsbart auf der Esplanade von Ischl nicht gut aussieht. Aber stecken Sie ihn in ein lang herabwallendes Gewand, das kostbar sein darf und die Beine verdeckt, so werden Sie sehen, wie ausgezeichnet sein Gesicht und seine großen lebhaften Bewegungen zu dieser Kleidung passen!...Ich bin ein Gegner der Assimilation, wie sie der englische Adel praktiziert; das ist ein langwieriger und unsicherer Prozeß: Aber geben Sie den Juden ihr wahres Wesen zurück, und Sie sollen sehen, wie diese ein Edelstein, ja geradezu ein Adel besonderer Art unter den Völkern sein werden, die sich um den Thron Seiner Majestät dankbar scharen oder, wenn Sie sich das lieber alltäglich und ganz deutlich vorstellen wollen, auf unserer Ringstraße spazieren gehn, die dadurch so einzigartig in der Welt dasteht, daß man auf ihr inmitten der höchsten westeuropäischen Eleganz, wenn man mag, auch einen Mohammedaner mit seinem roten Kappl, einen Slowaken im Schafpelz oder einen Tiroler mit nackten Beinen sehen kann!’ (844).

For Leinsdorf, counter to the cultural and economic incentives of the imperial applied arts program, there should by no means be an attempt to abstract or “modernize” folk costumes in the name of Austrian industrialization or aesthetic progress. The Count’s rendering of the ethnic peoples of the monarchy reflects positively upon the 1908 Jubilee parade’s glorious enactment of cultural diversity in the crown lands. Leinsdorf believes imperial authorities should celebrate the genuinely multiethnic qualities of the Habsburg state; in fact, glossing over these visual disparities does more political harm than good. The Ringstraße is the only place in the world where western European elegance coexists with the Muslim wearing his red fez, the Slovak cloaked in sheepskin, and the bare legs of the Tyrolean in his *Tracht*. Without any doubt Musil takes this juxtaposed image of European modernity and Austro-Hungarian folks costumes from the 1908 parade; Leinsdorf, as opposed to critics such as Kraus and Loos, dwells not on the problematic aesthetic incongruity of the event through its fraudulent manifestation of the imperial applied arts

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<sup>10</sup> “Die Bildung hat dem Besitz nicht das Gleichgewicht gehalten, das ist das ganze Geheimnis der Entwicklung seit achtzehnhunderteinundsechzig! Und darum müssen wir uns mit dem Besitz beschäftigen” (846).

program, but chooses instead to embrace visual expressions of national self-determination as a vehicle to thwart resentment among all imperial denizens. Leinsdorf's rejection of transforming folk art in order to forge a false sense of cultural universality thus underscores Musil's critique of imperial design as a lofty enterprise steeped in the superficial dabbings of the bourgeois market.

In a late chapter from Musil's posthumous papers, "General von Stumm läßt eine Bombe fallen. Weltfriedenskongreß," General Stumm takes charge of conducting the Parallel Action meetings from Count Leinsdorf, whose reasonably perplexed view of the campaign's purpose vacillates between grand imperial spectacle and his growing allegiances to Socialist politics. While Leinsdorf's musings on the Ringstraße as the harmonious junction of Austro-Hungarian folk cultures may qualify the Count as a revisionist historian of the year 1908, Stumm summons the pan-Germanic sentiments elicited by many reviewers of Kakania's previous jubilee celebration. In discussing how the 1918 parade will look, the General makes the following statement about the only definitively planned segment of the Parallel Action:

'Denn der Trachtenfestzug und wahrscheinlich eine Militärparade sind das einzige, was bis jetzt von den Feierlichkeiten feststeht. Es werden die Tiroler Standschützen über die Ringstraße marschieren, denn die geben mit ihren grünen Hosenträgern, den Hahnenfedern und den langen Bärten immer ein malerisches Bild ab...Jedenfalls ist das eine sicher, daß es bei uns einen Festzug ohne Menschen, die in altdeutschen Kostümen auf Faßwagen und Bierpferden sitzen, nicht geben kann und noch nie gegeben hat; und ich kann mir bloß nicht vorstellen, wie das im Mittelalter selbst gewesen ist, als die altdeutschen Kostüme noch nicht alt gewesen sind, und nicht einmal älter ausgeschaut haben als heutzutage ein Smoking!' (1119-1120).

Stumm's caricature of the old Germanic *Volk* recalls Oskar Kokoschka's costume designs for the Upper Austrian group in the 1908 Jubilee much more than the postimperial Alpine nationalism of Luis Trenker films. His description of Tyrolean military men, with their green suspenders, feathered hats and long birds, evokes both Ludwig Hevesi's laudatory and Karl Kraus's parodic responses to the "quaint" (*malerisch*) images presented in the Jubilee. At the same time, Stumm admits that the wearing of such folk costumes and driving around in beer wagons does not represent the authentic inclinations of the Austria people – these are activities reserved only for the more performative aspects of special occasions. Count Leinsdorf, on the other hand, has argued that authentic folk costume be integrated into everyday life around the Ringstraße; the true embodiment of folk culture should pervade the most banal of circumstances – only then can the different ethnic groups of the empire strive towards the common cause of a respectfully supranational Kakanian culture.

With these two final perspectives on the display of folk designs in the public sphere, Musil invokes the debate between Alois Riegl and Berta Zuckerkandl on imperial motivations in unlocking the transcultural potential of the applied arts, as well as Kraus and Loos's critical engagement with the decorative politics of public imperial spectacles. Even as *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* drifts off into incomplete fragments, Musil succeeds in integrating the applied arts discourse throughout this massive essayistic meditation; the farces of Habsburg bureaucracy and bourgeois fixations on decorative structures and self-presentation reveal ultimately that culture's earnest attempts at social and political harmony through a carefully designed program of artistic production.

## CONCLUSION

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The ornate flourishes of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese applied arts indicate much more than the stylish lifestyles of the imperial bourgeois elite. By examining closely the policies and practices behind such objects, modern design becomes a nexus for the aesthetic, economic, ethnic, and political concerns that shaped the final decades of Habsburg rule in Central and Eastern Europe. The convergence of design and imperial politics in the realms of aesthetic theory, art criticism, literature, and public performance highlights the extraordinary extent to which this discourse seeped into the modern Austrian consciousness by fashioning a quilt of cultural plurality that would cover the vast territories of the Dual Monarchy. The utopian aspects of this enterprise are very much in line with the creative ideals of the mid-to late-nineteenth century. Commenting on the versatility of such endeavors for “The Age of Empire,” Eric Hobsbawm has remarked the following:

In no century before or since have practical men and women had such high, such utopian, expectations for life on this earth: universal peace, universal culture by means of a single world language... These were not only dreams of revolutionaries. Utopia through progress was in fundamental ways built into the century. Oscar Wilde was not joking when he said that no map of the world which did not contain Utopia was worth having. He was speaking for Cobden the free trader as well as for Fourier the socialist, for President Grant as well as for Marx (who rejected not utopian aims, but only utopian blue-prints), for Saint-Simon, whose utopia of ‘industrialism’ can be assigned neither to capitalism nor to socialism, because it can be claimed by both. But the novelty about the most characteristic nineteenth-century utopias was that in them history would *not* come to a stop.<sup>1</sup>

Due to its combined focus on exquisite forms and practical functionality, the applied arts scheme appealed to Austrians of all economic and political inclinations, and its products provided an effective means of communicating both national and imperial interests. As Hobsbawm notes, the progressive potential of industrialism afforded modern methods of manufacture fervent admirers from opposite ends of the political spectrum; it was in this way that applied arts in Austria-Hungary could simultaneously foster a sense of supranational imperial culture and provide those in the crown lands the tools with which to forge distinct national identities. Much like the more general phenomenon of utopianism

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<sup>1</sup> Hobsbawm 338-339.

that Hobsbawm articulates above, the imperial design program was not a means of suspending time. Not only did history continue as such objects were created and circulated, but the consequences of historical change were embedded into their very design.

Contrary to the utopian aspirations of Austrian designers, yet perhaps in line with both official imperial policy and the regional forces of nationalism, if even on subconscious level, Ernst Gombrich has warned against the idealistic edge of ornament:

Ornament is dangerous precisely because it dazzles us and tempts the mind to submit without proper reflection. The attractions of richness and splendour are for the childish; a grown-up person should resist these blandishments and opt for the sober and the rational. In this sense the warnings against displays of decoration [as in *The Merchant of Venice*] are a tribute to its psychological attraction. We are asked to be on our guard because they may work only too well.<sup>2</sup>

The allure of ornament is undeniable, particularly when it offers someone the joyful opportunity to bring decorative objects into the domestic sphere. The power of such embellishment, however, lies in its ability to manipulate emotions and bring the individual back into the blissfully naïve state of childhood—an especially dangerous effect when there may be more acute issues looming on the horizon. Although there are more than seven decades between Loos's incisive attack on ornament in imperial Vienna and Gombrich's general study on the psychological consequences of the decorative arts, both men advise the viewer to think critically before giving in to the consequential whims brought about by the ornate surface. The Diamond Jubilee of Emperor Franz Joseph in 1908 revealed how imperial agencies and national organizers alike found in the pleasures of modern design and traditional crafts a reflective mode of persuasion, while Robert Musil lingered on the Viennese fascination with intricate façades to expose the bureaucratic entanglements afflicting Austria-Hungary just before World War I.

By looking specifically at the conditions and reception of design in the Habsburg Empire, larger questions of aesthetic enterprise, cultural plurality, and the modern state begin to take shape. Much scholarship has focused on the rise of nationalism in Austria-Hungary and its often volatile repercussions for the twentieth century, but the supranational gestures that strove toward cultural and political cohesion are in need of extensive further study. Ultimately the fanciful visions of imperial authorities fostered the nationalist cultures they had hoped to suppress by promoting the applied arts as a popular and easily reproducible medium of visual expression. At the same time, however, these products did allow both artists and consumers to transcend cultural, ethnic and linguistic boundaries in a creative and nonviolent manner. The Habsburg scheme of imperial design provides a strikingly complex and opulent framing with which to consider Austria's historical commitment to diversity and the implications of such for cross-cultural debates in our contemporary global climate. By revisiting this legacy of integration through the applied arts in Austria-Hungary, one may uncover common narratives that were lost nearly a century ago, at a time when the Habsburg successor states are challenging notions of what it means to be culturally European.

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<sup>2</sup> Gombrich 17.



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