



Archiving/Architecture

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Preface

Nowhere, it can be claimed, is social memory more forcefully and publicly enshrined than in the built monument. But the monument is a rare and special instance, one in which two otherwise divergent and contradictory practices come together. The two enterprises are that of the architect and that of the archivist. The fact that architecture in and of the built environment, and architecture in and of the archive, are so utterly different from one another is, of course, the main arguments in favor of both collecting and building architectural works. This divergence is also the reason why each and every example of convergence between a conception of architecture as archive, and a conception of architecture as built artifact, represents power, for power – typically enormous power – is required to bring any built architectural work in alignment with its archival double. This paper attempts to describe these two modes of architecture, built and documented, and relays the story of a contemporary restoration project in the city of Prague in which the two versions refuse to come together.

Part I: Archives and Houses

It is conventional and useful for both architects and archivists to recognize that architecture exists in two distinct modes: first, the built artifact and second, representations of that artifact. This division is useful precisely because it allows architecture in the second sense to be collected, catalogued and protected by archival institutions without having to deal with the messy business of built work. The Le Corbusier Foundation in Paris does not collect buildings by the French master, although it is housed in one; the Mies van der Rohe archive at the Museum of Modern Art in New York contains not a single Mies building nor is it housed in a Mies structure. A rare and instructive counter example is the case of a Lord in London who embarked on a project to “archive” several actual buildings by Mies. The pending lawsuit by the

Lord's future heirs, who charge that the patriarch has lost his mind (and their inheritance) suggests that the distinction between the artifact and the document is blurred at considerable risk.

However, the distinction between built work and its representations is more than a matter of convenience. For architects and for archivists, built work evidences several fundamental deficiencies, and collecting and preserving its representations is a project aimed at compensating for a lack. This lack is not subtle and singular but glaring and multifaceted. Most obvious is architecture's inextricable relationship with change. Architecture of the built environment ages and weathers, is subject to quotidian appropriation, is modified by changing needs, and is part of a dynamic that resists steady state descriptors. Built works always offer more dimensions than any notion of original conception can contain. It is unruly in this respect, unrestrained. Furthermore, built work is hardly ever a totalized, authored product; built work has no privileged condition of finality or origin. Buildings are products of forces and persons rather than unmediated individual inspiration and unmediated preconception, and buildings become more mediated as they leave the drafting room and enter the physical world. Built work is subject to radical reconstruction socially and iconographically without changing a single brick, and yet built work can conceivably be replicated *ad infinitum* through complete reconstruction using originally specified components. Most every built work is itself a reproduction, made of reproducible and interchangeable components. In short, built work has a troubled relationship to questions of originality.

The architectural archive promises to stabilize architecture; this is the archive's task and gift. The archive confers a Benjaminian aura of originality on artifacts that are at risk of becoming mere commodities, and allows the conceit of authorship to gain a plausible foothold. Proximity to the creative moment operates as a value in the archive, but significantly less so in the built artifact; a Mies drawing, but not a Mies building, is understood as an original (thus a reconstruction of a Mies building is not seen as problematic as long as the materials used are accurate replicas, while reproducing a Mies drawing is regardless of the authenticity of the materials used). As an institution that arrests temporality, the archive effectively creates a parallel discipline to built architecture, a discipline that has as its center of gravity precisely those attributes that built work can never offer. Noble and heroic, it is the archive that offers the fundamental means of reclaiming architecture's purity. In other words, the archive is less a record of the genesis of built or projected work as it is a supplement for the qualities that the built work will inevitably lack.

The architectural archive is as much the product of desire on the part of architects as it is the result of collecting practices on the part of archivists. For it is clear that many architectural records are produced precisely to compensate for the same lack that the archive agrees to value. There is a well-established tradition in the field of architecture of producing visual material full of excess, of qualities well beyond marketing needs and the utility of construction. Architectural images – plans, sections, photographs, sketches – are almost always conceptualized in terms of the archive, as visual arguments loaded with surplus power to resist the passage of time, the burden of gravity, and the contingencies of use. Daniel Burnham's grand perspectives of Chicago, Le Corbusier's sketches of white villas, Mies's sparse collages: all were done with a degree of enthusiasm fueled by justified doubt that the executed work would attain and retain the same grandeur, the same untarnished whiteness, or the same sparseness. The archive is a home proper to these passions, which demand to be accepted on their own terms.

To claim that the archive is a memory machine distorts the relationship between architectural records and built architecture, for records are not, as it were, infant buildings. The archive is more accurately described as a machine for forgetting – forgetting that architectural projects are ontologically distinct from, and quite distant from, their representations. Buildings and documents related to buildings have utterly divergent trajectories that at best cross only at the briefest moments (during construction, for example) and diverge relentlessly as a function of time. The function of the archive is not to *prevent* this separation but to *insist* upon it, to quarantine certain records from the contamination of age, weather and abuse. Paradoxically, in the architecture of the built environment the same qualities of age, weathering, and usage are typically indexes of value rather than contamination. There is a discourse proper to the archive and a parallel discourse proper to the built environment, for the two domains tell different stories, offer different insights, and are mediated by different forces. There is, to be sure, cross-fertilization: studying the drawings of Louis Sullivan one learns how to see the built work of Louis Sullivan. Seeing the weathering of a work by Carlo Scarpa one learns how to read his cryptic drawings. But expecting the built and the drawn to be alike is an expectation born of ideology rather than of nature.

The division between buildings and representations of buildings outlined above is not unproblematic. In a very real sense, images of built work are themselves constructions, and built works are themselves representations. It has been argued that images of buildings constitute the true and most influential aspect of architecture, that architectural ideas are propagated through secondary media (photography in particular but drawing too of course) to the degree where the built artifact is of relatively little consequence, a mere

byproduct of a larger project to change the fabric of the environment.¹ In an extreme version of this model, not only is architecture extended throughout society via media channels, but the channels themselves are conceptualized as prosthetic extensions of humankind, and these prosthetic extensions *are* architecture. This was the central message and mission of “architects” such as Buckminster Fuller, John McHale, and the Archigram Group, who famously argued that the telephone, the space suit, and networks of all kinds are central to the work of the architect. The rise of schools of “environmental design” in the late 1960’s signaled this expansive definition.

Additionally, it has also been argued that buildings are not just the products of conventionalized, representational technologies (orthogonal projections, axonometrics, perspectives, and the like) but that buildings *are* a form of representational technology. To be sure, buildings should keep out the rain, but roofs and columns participate in an irreducible semiotic web that precludes any possibility of disinterested, unmediated apprehension. To borrow Barthes’ observation on textuality, every column has already been written, every roof is a citation, built architecture is a “tissue of quotations”.² Built work is thus a record every bit as open to, and in need of, interpretation as is a document housed in an archive.

These two formulations – the (unbuilt) document is architecture; architecture is a (built) document – are not mutually exclusive and are surely both valid conceptions of the architect’s enterprise as the construction of representations. Thus the documents of the archive can claim as central a role in the definition of architecture as can the buildings themselves. The difference between the two is not one of primacy but rather one of character, and the argument being advanced here is that the two are mutually dependent, like bricks and mortar. The following picture thus emerges: two parallel and rarely intersecting conceptions of architecture exist. One, the architecture of archival records, is framed as an architecture of fixity, originality, and authorial voice. Cordoned off from the vicissitudes of external forces, this architecture is cast as a touchstone of original intent, of ideation freed from weight. The other architecture is that of the built environment. It is an architecture subject to contingent forces but nonetheless – or because of this – resplendent in its material fullness and thus not at all inferior to its archival double. Being fully present in the world, this is the architecture that moved

¹ Beatrix Colomina, “Mies Not”, in Detlef Mertins (ed.), *The Presence of Mies* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), pp. 193–222.

² Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author”, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 146 pp.

John Ruskin to write “. . . how many pages of doubtful record might we not often spare, for a few stones left upon another”!³

These two worlds are often separate, but not always. At moments, admittedly rare, an effort is launched to bring them together, to slide the architecture of the archive over the architecture of the built environment and to bring the built work into conformity with its archival double. As the worlds are typically distant from one another, the effort required to undo or reverse this distance (or to prevent distance from occurring in the case of new construction) is monumental. In particular, I am referring here to large restoration projects, although the same observations apply to modest works of historic preservation. In both cases, a state of fixity is desired that is inherently foreign to the built fabric of the world. The product of this desire can be defined as an architectural monument, wherein the gap between the archive and the building is closed, and architecture becomes an archive of itself.

Such products are common features of the cultural landscape: *Falling Waters* by Frank Lloyd Wright, Jefferson's *Monticello*, the *Villa Savoy* by Le Corbusier, to name a few. It is important to note that such archived architectures live highly artificial lives and that decisions regarding the nature of these lives are deeply implicated in the fabrication of national, local, and discipline-specific mythologies. As suggested in the opening paragraph, archiving buildings is also a costly affair, and such projects almost always bear the imprint of economic and political power interests often operating under the umbrella of “heritage tourism”. A case in point is the current effort in Buffalo, New York, to restore an early and mammoth residential complex designed by Wright in 1904, the Darwin D. Martin House. The restoration project, estimated to exceed 25 million dollars, involves a series of monumental “undoings”, including: buying back parcels of the original site that had been subdivided; fabricating pieces of furniture to replace missing originals that are now far too expensive to purchase; fabricating “new” bricks to match the original stones and cleaning the old bricks to look as they did when new; imploding a three story apartment building erected in the 1960's in the middle of the original complex; and erasing an “original” Wright window remodeling done at the insistence of Mrs. Martin who could not see in her bedroom due to lack of adequate fenestration. Guiding this work are the extensive Martin House archives at the University of Buffalo. But the impetus for the work lies elsewhere: at an estimated \$200/day spent by the typical cultural tourist (versus \$90/day spent by the leisure tourist), the Martin House Restoration Corporation anticipates bringing \$20 million dollars annually to Buffalo's

³ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981), 169 pp.

depressed economy.⁴ “Architecture is going to be the great contribution to the civilization of the future”, claimed the Master, prophetically.⁵

A new architectural monument in the above sense was recently unveiled in the city of Prague, the restoration of a modernist villa built in 1930 by the architect Adolf Loos. Like all such projects, archival records played a significant role in the restoration effort. Like all such projects, every effort was made to determine and encapsulate a state of originality. But unlike other such projects, unlike Wright, the architect had, as it were, set a trap designed to prevent his work from falling prey to the monumentalizing impulse that guided the enthusiastic researchers. The second section of this paper is dedicated not so much the story of fine archival detective work (although there was that), not so much a testament to the utility of archival records (although they were heavily used), but rather the story of architecture’s revenge on its archive.

II. Archiving Houses

The Villa Müller is a work of enormous complexity, the pinnacle of Adolf Loos’s career as an architect, built for Frantisek Müller, the young and wealthy owner of one of Europe’s largest construction firms. The villa was immediately celebrated as a masterpiece and entered architectural history as one of the canonical works of the modern period.⁶ The Villa Müller survived both the war and the communistic era intact; indeed it wasn’t until the advent of post-Velvet Revolution capitalism that the building’s fate was endangered. In the absence of any preservation regulations that would protect the interior of the building, it appeared likely that a private owner would purchase the masterpiece and reconstruct it.

At this point the nascent Czech government, after considerable hesitation, purchased the villa and launched a high profile campaign to restore it. The Villa Müller was to become a major landmark in the city’s cultural identity; the Villa Müller was to become a monument. The restoration project began by consulting the Loos archives at the *Albertina Graphische Sammlung* in Vienna. Additional valuable material was found precisely where it had been catalogued over 70 years ago, in the local building department. The villa itself became the site of forensic investigation.

⁴ Martin House Restoration Corporation, promotional materials (Buffalo, 1999).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Kent Kleinman and Leslie Van Duzer, *The Villa Müller: A Work of Adolf Loos* (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1994). Recent articles on the restoration have appeared in *The New York Times*, January 4, 2001, F11, and *Metropolis Magazine*, February 2001, 62–65 pp.

As in any architectural restoration, there were many moments of doubt concerning the accuracy of the restoration project. The architect's drawings were consulted; period photographs were scrutinized; archeological techniques were summoned. But there was doubt about the legitimacy of that supporting evidence. Were the architect's drawings in fact accurate reflections of what was built, and if not, what should govern: the architect's intentions as drawn, or the building as realized under the watchful eye of the architect? Were the photographs legitimate reflections of the state of inhabitation, or were they staged? Then too, there were the typical doubts that accompany archeological expeditions. How deeply should one dig? What if one discovers material of historic interest buried beneath material of historic interest? And, of course, there were doubts about comprehensiveness. Does it really matter what lies beneath the visible surface of things? Could one make technical improvements without sacrificing the authenticity of the work?

Every architectural restoration raises these problems. The French architect Viollet-le-Duc – who believed that his century, the nineteenth, initiated the very notion of restoration and who considered himself among the first generation of restorers – dedicated an entire chapter in his *Dictionnaire raisonné* to the thorny issues involved in the restoration of buildings. He anticipated many of these problems, even those related to the then new issue of photography-as-evidence. “To restore a building is not to preserve it, to repair it, or rebuild it”; he writes, “it is to reinstate it in a condition of completeness that could never have existed at any given time”.⁷ In short, to restore is always to produce a new work. Thus, in the reconstruction of the German Pavilion in Barcelona by Mies van der Rohe, the roof structure had to be redesigned in order to look original while compensating for the originally inadequate construction; drains had to be added so that the building would survive its new status as a permanent structure.⁸ The story of the reconstruction of Loos's Villa Müller, no less than that of Mies's masterpiece, was full of fine detective work, dogged thoroughness, and the mental teases that required principled judgment calls.

Notwithstanding these inherent problems, after several years of monumental effort and monumental expense, the villa was brought into alignment with much of the documentary evidence that could be found. In fact, a veritable archive of documents was assembled during the process of recon-

⁷ Viollet-le-Duc, “Defining the Nature of Restoration” in Hearn M. F. (ed.), *The Architectural Theory of Viollet-le-Duc: Readings and Commentary* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), p. 269.

⁸ This and other information regarding the restoration of the German Pavilion is contained in Rosa M. Subirana i Torrent (ed.), *Mies van der Rohe's German Pavilion in Barcelona 1929–1986* (Barcelona: Public Foundation for the Mies Van der Rohe German Pavilion in Barcelona, 1986), pp. 66–88.

struction, and a parallel archival version emerged from the process that *ipso facto* certified the veracity of the restoration effort.

Or did it? Is it possible that the very proximity of the archival and built version of Villa Müller produced a fraudulent work? Is it possible that in the process of restoring the building to an original state it became less and less authentic, that this painstaking process of seamlessly superimposing the archival on the built inadvertently conflated two incompatible architectural conceptions? Could it be that architecture needs to be immunized against its archival double rather than nourished by it, that the archival impulse was a motive foreign to this architecture?

Loos himself made certain that the answers to these questions would be in the affirmative. In addition to designing buildings, the architect produced a prodigious and influential body of critical essays, texts that have influenced the field even more profoundly than his buildings. And Loos was motivated by one issue more than any other, namely that of originality in architecture. The thread through all his written work is an assault on all those who inappropriately sought to infuse use-objects with an authorial voice. His favorite targets for critique were the members of the Wiener Werkbund: Josef Hoffmann, Henry van der Velde, and Josef Olbrich in particular. His credo was simple, or at least simply stated:

“Alle . . . unzeitgemäßen arbeiten waren von künstlern und architekten geraten waren, während die arbeiten, die zeitgemäß waren, von handwerkern geschaffen wurden, denen der architekt noch keine entwürfe lieferte. . . . Für mich stand der satz fest: wollt ihr ein zeitgemäßes handwerk haben, . . . so vergiftet die architekten.”

“all . . . works that are inappropriate for our time were the products of craftsmen who relied on the advice of artists and architects, whereas those works that are in the spirit of the times were made by craftsmen who had not received designs from an architect. . . . For me one thing was certain: if you want products appropriate for their era, . . . poison the architects”.⁹

Loos was preaching what he practiced. When he stated “*Genug der originalgenies! Wiederholen wir uns unaufhörlich selbst!*” (“Enough original genius! Let us repeat ourselves endlessly”),¹⁰ he was describing and advocating both his architectural and his literary modus. One finds essays dedicated to the critique of originality/invention/misplaced artistry in the earliest articles Loos published for the weekly paper *Die Zeit* in 1897 and in the very last piece he penned some 36 years later, a veritable hymn to a simple,

⁹ Adolf Loos, “Hands Off!” in *Trotzdem* (Vienna: Georg Prachner Verlag, 1982), 132 pp.

¹⁰ Adolf Loos, “Heimatkunst” in *Trotzdem* (Vienna: Georg Prachner Verlag, 1982), 130 pp.

vernacular wooden saltshaker, published the year of his death.¹¹ Loos explicitly parodies the quest for originality in his 1900 fable “*Von einem armen, reichen Man*” (“The Poor Little Rich Man”) in which a battle is staged between what might be termed the *authentic* (time-tested, utilitarian objects and environments integrated with life’s dramas) and the *obsessively original*. The poor rich man is reduced to misery by an environment in which even the slippers are matched to the decor. Twenty years later, in a moving obituary to the furniture maker Joseph Viellich, he expressly advocates the culture of the well-chosen copy: “*jede handwerkliche leistung ist kopie*” (“every work of craftsmanship is a copy”) over the cult of nervous inventiveness: “*nur unter narren verlangt jeder nach seiner eignen kappe*” (“only among dunces does everyone demand their own personalized cap”).¹²

The originality that Loos so detested was not that of creative genius per se; it was that of creative genius romping in the wrong field. For Loos, architecture was the wrong field; in fact, the appropriate domain for authorial invention was limited to one domain only, namely art, and one of Loos’s lasting contributions to 20th century theory was to divorce architecture and art, absolutely.

As even this cursory review suggests, the name Adolf Loos and the issue of originality in works of architecture are inextricably intertwined. And this brings us back to the restored villa in Prague, and by extension, to the act of “archiving” architecture in general. For the weight of the architect’s texts make one conclusion immediately clear and inescapable: the restored Villa Müller is no longer a house. It is not even architecture, certainly not a Loos. It has undergone an ontological shift. It has instead all the trappings of an oxymoron: an original Loos.

Worse still, it has become a work of art. We know that the villa is aspiring to the status of art for the following reason: we can no longer touch it. This precondition for art is taken from Karl Kraus via Walter Benjamin. According to Benjamin, Kraus noted that

“On reading the words with which Goethe censures the way the Philistine, and thus many an art connoisseur, run their fingers over engravings and reliefs, the revelation came to [Loos] that what may be touched cannot be a work of art, and that a work of art must be out of reach”.¹³

¹¹ Adolf Loos, “Vom Nachsalzen” in *Die Potemkinsche Stadt* (Vienna: Georg Prachner Verlag, 1983), 231 pp.

¹² Adolf Loos, “Joseph Veillich” in *Trotzdem* (Vienna: Georg Prachner Verlag, 1982), 216 pp.

¹³ Walter Benjamin, “Karl Kraus” in Peter Demetz (ed.), *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 240–241.

Loos himself does not, to my knowledge, credit Goethe with this observation, but a kind of haptic test does ground both Loos's and Kraus's confidence in the categorical distinction between objects of use and works of art. Benjamin took up this theme of art's inherent "distance" explicitly in his 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". In his discussion on what brings about the decay of the aura of a work of art, Benjamin cites the public's insatiable desire for proximity. "Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness . . .".¹⁴ This desire to touch fulfills itself only when the artwork is within grasp, namely through its reproduction, which in turn destroys the work's aura. One of the things that we appropriate in this manner is architecture, which we apprehend in a distracted manner, by habit, by use, and by touch. "Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building", Benjamin notes.¹⁵ "Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit. . . . The public is an examiner, but an absent-minded one".¹⁶

Loos embraced this distracted examiner; one might say he valorized this character well before Benjamin theorized him. The core of so many of Loos's tales swirl around the fate of those who experience the world haptically, at close range: Joseph Veillich, the chair maker; the "poor rich man" whose fall from happiness coincides with the moment when he is forbidden to touch anything in his home without his architect's approval; the happy owner (Loos himself) of a desk whose ink stains and scratches and other signs of wear produce a sentimental reverie; and the saddle maker, who cannot match the artistic fantasies of the design professor because he, the saddle maker, has actually handled leather. Saddles, desks, rooms, objects of use in general are there to be touched. At the risk of being branded an essentialist – a risk that bothered Loos's generation not at all – one can say that this is a categorical essence.

To deny touch to "original" archival material is fundamental to the archive's mission. To deny touch to the villa is to transform it, not only categorically, but also critically. We now pass through the halls of the villa, we gaze out onto the restored living room, we admire the extraordinary tableau, and we ask ourselves: if this work is now no longer to be appropriated in the manner Loos considered natural to architecture, just what kind of appropriation is appropriate? And because we are presented with a "building as

¹⁴ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in Hannah Arendt (ed.), *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 223.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 240–241.

artwork”, the answer, it seems, is that we should appropriate the building in that mode long considered natural to works of art: namely absorbed contemplation. “A man who concentrates before a work of art becomes absorbed by it”,¹⁷ Benjamin reminds us, echoing a long history which is the root of Goethe’s prohibition against touching art.

But this answer is hardly satisfying for the simple reason that people don’t respond like that to buildings, even to truly great buildings. It is difficult to imagine a visitor to the new villa frozen in suspended animation and rapt contemplation in front of a perfectly restored Loosian bathroom (unless, as is not all that difficult to imagine, the visitor is sneaking a photograph). The kind of absorption produced by artworks is not produced by architecture because this response has long been considered to be the product of works that are themselves self-absorbed. Absorbed contemplation, at least in many schools of thought, is an attribute of works of art, not just a description of their reception. Balance, unity, consistency, proportionality, thematic coherence: the kind of artwork capable of producing a trance-like state of total absorption is said to possess these things within the context of its own frame. This is why Loos insisted that a Beethoven symphony is different from a doorbell chiming a Beethovenian riff. As conceptualized by Loos and his compatriots, artworks are distant; artworks do not, and should not, encourage the literal engagement of the beholder as does a light switch or a fireplace or a doorbell.

So we may have to revise downward our already troubling observation. No longer is Loos’s house architecture. We cannot get close to it now; it is presented as a work of art. It has been rendered distant, not with a gilded frame, but with equally effective velvet cords. But as art, it is of the very kind that Loos repeatedly lampooned because it cannot fully produce the contemplative state. One might disagree with Loos’s conceptualization of art and architecture, of the defining essence of use objects, and of art as distant. But has the careful restoration, despite its physical accuracy, produced a work so fundamentally different than Loos’s original that the *irony of that difference* threatens to occlude its appreciation? Is irony in fact Loos’s final word? For Loos, as we know, always wanted to have the final word.

Loos does not, cannot, have the final word. The above lament suggests that if some of the energy that had gone into restoration had been spent on designing a new use, all would be better. An essential condition, the *sine qua non* of Loos’s original architectural conception, would be restored, and thus the work would be more Loosian, more *authentic*, than in its present petrified state. But some will immediately recoil at this formulation, for it relies quite explicitly on the notion that there is a history proper to the building, and other histories that are not, and the authenticating agency for that which is

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 239.

proper is Adolf Loos. But one can argue against this allocation of legitimizing power just as Loos implicitly argued against the legitimizing power of the architectural archive. One can argue that it is not so much Loos who is being represented by this project but the nascent Czech Republic, with its laudable mission to democratize access to this and many other landmark structures previously off-limits, a government eager to prevent the appearance of any privileged group profiting from public expenditure, and certainly a government anxious to demonstrate that it is protecting the public's investment by encapsulating it. The story that is being constructed with this restoration can also be understood as a precise undoing, a surgical negation, of the villa's status between 1968 and 1989, when it was occupied and controlled by the Marxist-Leninist Institute of Czechoslovakia (a condition that clearly fell outside the archival conception of originality). Certainly, when the first wave of visitors tour the restored villa, the ghost of Villa Müller's immediate political past will be as present as that of its architect. In short, one can observe that works of great prominence inevitably enter into the representational machinery that turns out the building blocks of society's self-image, namely monuments. And the final word is, of course, that the Villa Müller is no exception.