

PAUL SCHEERBART'S *THE GRAY CLOTH* AND THE POLITICS OF GERMAN ARCHITECTURAL INTERNATIONALISM

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In the four decades preceding World War I, Germany developed a series of militaristic, economic and political agendas aimed at securing its dominance in the world marketplace.¹ This involved the organization of strong land, naval and air forces designed not only to protect German trade routes but to intimidate the Entente Cordiale that consisted of England, France and Russia.² With the assassination in late June 1914 of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, the German government was thrown into what has been described as the "July Crisis," a month of political and diplomatic mishaps that drew Europe to World War I by early August. Conditioned by decades of competitive armament for military superiority on land, sea and air that was facilitated by new diplomatic uses of communications technologies, Germany, Russia, England, France and much of the rest of Europe responded rapidly to the call to arms.³ As summed up in 1914 by the famous Berlin social



Fig. 1. Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1912.

and political activist Rosa Luxemburg: "the questions of militarism and imperialism are the central axis of today's political life."⁴

Integral to notions of militarism and imperialism was the nationalism that pervaded German design ideology. Kaiser Wilhelm II, the reigning Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia from 1888-1918, set a conservative agenda for art and architecture when he stated in 1909 that "an art which transgresses the laws and barriers outlined by Me, ceases to be an art; it is merely a factory product, a trade, and art must never become such a thing."⁵ With increasing dependence on the growing class of wealthy industrialists for patronage of art and architecture, the Kaiser was adamant in his desire to control the direction of Germany's material culture. He sought to establish "laws and barriers," and to unify the agenda of imperial patronage and of art and architecture in general. Closely connected to this imperial mandate was the Prussian Ministry's Advisor on Applied Arts [*Referent für das Kunstgewerbe*], Hermann Muthesius. In 1907 Muthesius, Friedrich Naumann and Karl Schmidt, among others founded the Werkbund to improve design standards and perpetuate nationalism through German design in international markets.⁶ The architect Fritz Schumacher gave the keynote speech at the design organization's opening in Munich. Lacing his message with rhetoric of conquest and competition, Schumacher stated:

The time has come when Germany should ... see in [the artist] one of the important powers for the ennobling of work, and thereby to ennoble the entire inner life of the Land and to make the Land victorious in the competition of peoples ... Everything that can be imitated soon loses its value on the international market; only the qualitative values which spring from the inexpressible inner powers of a harmonious culture are inimitable. And consequently there exists in aesthetic power also the highest economic value. After a century devoted to technique and thought, we see the next project which Germany has to fulfill as that of the reconquest of a harmonious culture.⁷

Debates over the strategy to attain a nationally unified or "harmonious culture" developed into one of the central

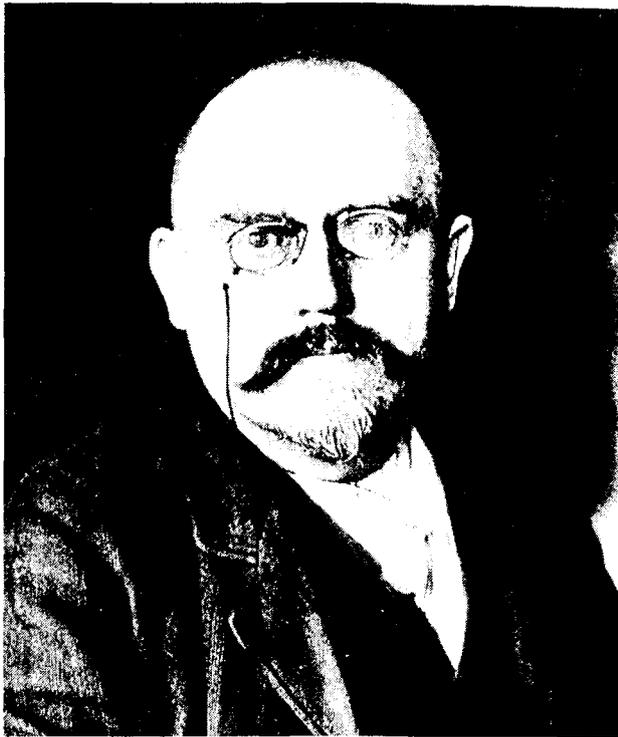


Fig. 2. Paul Scheerbart, 1911.

features of the *Werkbundstreit* or Werkbund Debate between Hermann Muthesius and Henry van de Velde in 1914.⁸ In broad terms, the dialogue focused on the debate between standardized design and individualized artistic creativity as the source of German design identity at home and abroad. This discussion attracted commentary by many involved in the Cologne Werkbund Exhibition of the same year. Revealing the central role of both aesthetics and internationalism to the Werkbund mission at the 1914 exhibition, Muthesius designed the Color Show and the Hamburg-Amerika Line Pavilion.⁹ The Werkbund Exhibition, however, also engaged broader issues of gender and material innovation in such projects as Margarete Knuettelholz-Roeser's designs for the Women's House, a pavilion showcasing women's crafts and interior design, and Bruno Taut's Glass House, which was sponsored by the Deutsche Luxfer Prism Syndikat.¹⁰ Through his involvement with Taut's Glass House, German Expressionist author, inventor and architectural visionary Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915) came to write not only his manifesto *Glass Architecture*¹¹ but also his final novel, *The Gray Cloth and Ten Percent White: A Ladies Novel*, both published just before the outbreak of war in 1914.¹² Like the Werkbund Exhibition, these works addressed construction innovations in broad cultural contexts of gender, internationalism and design. Scheerbart, however, defined a harmonious and utopian vision within a culture of colored glass architecture.

Between 1889-1914, Paul Scheerbart developed these ideals in a series of poems, short stories and fantasy novels.¹³ He first described the symbolic and metaphysical implications of glass in one of his earliest works, *Das Paradies. Die Heimat der Kunst* [Paradise. The Home of the Arts] (1899).¹⁴ In 1906 he expanded this vision of

colored-glass architecture into full-blown utopian and international dimensions with the publication of his creative interpretation of the Baron von Münchhausen myth in *Münchhausen und Clarissa*.¹⁵ Here, Scheerbart outlined the travels of the 18th century folk hero as he toured an imagined and extraordinary international exhibition in Melbourne, Australia.¹⁶ In his penultimate novel, *Lesabendio. Ein Astroiden-Roman* [Lesabendio. An Asteroid Novel] (1913), Scheerbart developed a narrative around an asteroid/planet called Pallas, whose inhabitants (unisex and entirely mutable in form) sought to understand their universe through the construction of an enormous observation tower.¹⁷ But unlike their 20th century German counterparts, the inhabitants of Pallas did not have capitalistic or imperialistic goals. One explorer from Pallas, for example, visited the Earth only to return with an account of carnivorous human scavengers who wounded and killed each other for no apparent reason. In the words of Walter Benjamin, Scheerbart depicted "the best of all worlds in this work."¹⁸

It was after his introduction to Bruno Taut in 1913, however, that Scheerbart initiated a detailed discourse on contemporary issues relevant to glass architecture.¹⁹ With *Glass Architecture* (1914) Scheerbart laid out 111 advantages that building with glass could provide in everyday life. Scheerbart's publisher, Georg Müller originally rejected the work as a set of "practical building suggestions."²⁰ It has been speculated that this frustrating rejection led Scheerbart to write his final novel, *The Gray Cloth and Ten Percent White: A Ladies Novel* (1914). Here, in the guise of a work written for and about women, Scheerbart provides a powerful lens through which the German design community and with it German *Weltpolitik* may be examined for its complex and often contradictory stances on internationalism, technology and harmonious culture.²¹

The author sets his novel in the mid-twentieth century, a strategy that allows him both to explore the maturation of early-twentieth century ideals for design and technology, and to reject the imminent consequences of militarism, German nationalism and empire.²² Scheerbart outlines the global future of glass architecture with lighthearted and ironic humor.²³ The novel's protagonist, Edgar Krug, a Swiss archaeologist-turned-architect, circumnavigates the globe by airship with his wife, Clara. Krug populates the planet with wildly varied, colored-glass architecture, including an elaborate high-rise and exhibition/concert hall in Chicago, a retirement complex for British airline pilots on the Fiji Islands, the structure for an elevated train traversing a zoological park in Northern India, a suspended residential villa for a Chinese client on the Kuria Muria Islands, and a museum of ancient "oriental" weapons on Malta. Surprisingly, Krug fears that his idiosyncratic, but popular architecture is challenged by one significant component of environmental design: the brilliance of women's clothing. In an effort to eliminate the competition he perceives, the architect requests a clause in his wedding contract demanding that his wife submit to a lifetime of clothing designed with ninety percent gray and ten percent white cloth, thus providing the formula found in the novel's title.

The novel's relationship to German internationalism is signaled in large part by Krug's identity and his peregrinations. As a Swiss citizen, Krug is separated from German nationalism while connected to a long history of neutrality in Europe. The fictitious architect, however, is identified as living near Brissago, a town known to the Romans as Verbano. Scheerbart's mention of this historical connection connects his protagonist to the Roman Empire that wove its way through the Alps from Rome to Germany. Along similar lines, Scheerbart seems to make a connection between Krug's travels and the tentacles of the British Empire. Several of Krug's destinations, such as the United States, India, the Kuria Muria Islands and Malta, were not only once part of the British Empire but also served as ports for the British fleet, connections for British telecommunications lines, and as travel destinations for British tourists. Respect for the British Empire ran high at the turn of the century as many German architectural theorists considered England "a model of internationalism" with a modern national design identity capable of worldwide export.²⁴ While Scheerbart takes advantage of many of the conditions of empire in the novel, he never explicitly states the political relationships between countries of the mid-twentieth century.

The Gray Cloth begins at an exhibition of decorative arts and sculpture in the United States:

Near Chicago on Lake Michigan, American sculptors and decorative artists had arranged an exhibition. There were, however, only works of silver on display. It was the middle of the twentieth century. The architect Edgar Krug had built the exhibition hall out of glass and iron. It was opening day and, with lively gestures, the architect led his friend, the lawyer Walter Lowe, around the enormous halls, pointing out details of the architecture and ornament.

The colossal walls were made completely out of colored glass, with colored ornament, so that only subdued daylight shone into the interior. It was raining outside. The sun was not shining. But the colors of the glass gleamed powerfully nonetheless....

Around midday, when the sun became visible outside, there was some commotion in the exhibition hall. The splendor of the colored glass ornament was so enhanced by the sun that one was at a loss for words to praise this wonder of color. Many visitors shouted repeatedly, "Delightful! Wonderful! Great! Incomparable!"²⁵

By locating the opening of his novel at an art exhibition of only American artists, Scheerbart references the modern history of arts and crafts exhibitions in Germany that often exclusively showcased German production. This particular exhibition, however, is in Chicago, however, the focus of global attention in the early 1900's as a result of the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition that, among other things, celebrated the colonial efforts of Western Europe. For this exhibition, Germany constructed the most expensive and, by contemporary accounts, the most "remarkable" pavilion

in an eclectic style to showcase the country's design.²⁶ Further indication of the international nature of the exhibition in *The Gray Cloth*, is Scheerbart's choice of name for the central space: "Tower of Babel." The name implies both the middle-Eastern roots Scheerbart ascribed to glass architecture and, with an ironic sensibility, the diversity of languages brought together within his vision mid-century internationalism.²⁷ This is reminiscent of comments by a visitor to the 1893 World's Fair, who observed that the exhibition displayed a "sliding scale of people speaking languages from around the globe."²⁸ As Mitchell Schwarzer notes, by 1909 Heinrich Waentig, the German historian of applied arts, had already deemed the "United States ... a dreamlike environment energized by raw natural powers, free market development, and unlimited productive activity."²⁹ By looking to Chicago, Scheerbart evokes an internationalist perspective on design based on the dissemination of ideas through expositions that included fantasy, futurism and capitalism as distinctive components.

Scheerbart's interest in new technologies as mechanisms for increased globalization extended to the medium of film. This is particularly significant given the newness of cinema and the limited nature of its artistic and informational content. First introduced to the public at the 1900 Paris Universal Exposition, cinema soon proved to be a central component of both political and architectural internationalism.³⁰ In *Designing Dreams: Modern Architecture in the Movies*, Donald Albrecht comments that:

No vehicle provided as effective and widespread an exposure of architectural imagery as the medium of the movies. Statistics of cinema attendance during the first half of the century suggest the ability of the movies to rival, if not actually surpass, exhibitions as a major means of promoting new design concepts.³¹

Film is introduced into *The Gray Cloth* in the context of Edgar Krug's marriage. Krug meets Clara Weber, an organist dressed in gray and white, at the Tower of Babel. Edgar is enchanted by her outfit and later that evening the two are married. The wedding, which includes a rather lengthy legal discussion of the material possibilities for the gray and white outfits, engenders considerable publicity. Following the wedding, an American movie producer, Mr. Stephan, creates a cinematic reenactment of the event. After some disagreement with the Krugs' lawyer about whether he could simplify Clara's outfit to all black, Mr. Stephan emphasizes the importance of film as a disseminator of design and of Chicago as the new design capital when he states:

Very well then, we'll choose gray. It doesn't have to be precise. The Europeans will think it's a sensation anyway. And through this they will be introduced to the glass architecture of Chicago. That is the main point! The executive direction contributes to this factor. It is, in fact, a giant advertisement!³²

Although the film is to be sensationalist, the documentary nature of Stephan's movie aligns it with another genre of film, the newsreel. These played not only formidable propagandistic and political roles during the Spanish American and the Boer wars, but fomented surges of nationalism in Europe before World War I.³³ In fact, the political nature of film was so powerful in France that a contemporary commentator suggested in 1913 that the cinema was "a kind of popular annex to the Elysée Palace."³⁴ Scheerbart proposes a shift in cinematic subjects away from expressions of nationalistic propaganda toward promotional images of international design culture. This is achieved through the depiction not only of architecture, but of the mobile upper-middle class that flies around the world constructing and inhabiting it.

The Krugs do not actually see the film until they land in Northern India to design a zoological park many months after their wedding. When they meet Mr. Stephan and view the film the Krugs are shocked by being made a public spectacle without their consent. With comic irony typical of Scheerbart, Clara first learns that Edgar is Swiss at this time as they argue with Mr. Stephan about the sensationalism of the film and its production for a European audience.³⁵ Given the timing and import of this revelation to the couple, the world in which they live is without nationalistic instincts. Rather it is a world based on international air transportation and communication. The film, however, gives the Krugs fame the world over, and with it a notoriety that clearly challenges their privileged and private bourgeois lifestyle.

One of the most conspicuous elements of the Krugs' lifestyles is also that which renders them iconic of future internationalism: the airship. Like cinema, the airship was an invention less than two decades old when Scheerbart wrote *The Gray Cloth*. It had, however, already sparked the imagination and pride of the German middle class.³⁶ When a zeppelin was sighted over Southern Germany in 1908, the *Schwabischer Merkur* reported:

*One feels its power: we are overcome by a nervous trembling as we follow the flight of the ship in the air. As only with the great artistic experiences, we feel ourselves uplifted. Some people rejoice, others weep.*³⁷

The power of the airship to evoke these feelings is clearly expressed in *The Gray Cloth*. The airships provide not only habitation, transportation and a perspective on the world, but a connection to the global community of air travelers. The novel's airships communicate through light signals, telegraph or, on one occasion, remote control. Internationally famed "tower organ" concerts are performed by Clara on musical instruments spread over vast landscapes. The audience listens from airships hovering above. Emphasizing the speed and versatility of future airships, several are even used as "getaway" vehicles for a globally condemned heist of ancient weapons from a museum in Malta. While Edgar Krug supposedly "knew the development of the airship perfectly" and revered its contribution, Scheerbart expressed his own fear that the militarism implicit in the development of air technology

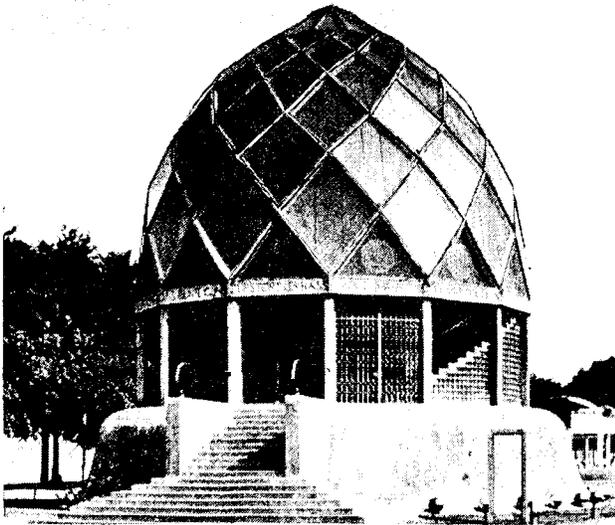


Fig. 3. Zeppelin over Berlin, 1909

would cause international calamity.³⁸ In contrast to his descriptions of the airship's peaceful civilian use in *The Gray Cloth*, Scheerbart reacted strongly against Germany's use of airships to carry bombs. In 1910, he published an article entitled *Der Militarismus und die Luftschiiffahrt* in which he stated: "The mere contemplation of such arts of war can cause a nervous breakdown."³⁹ Scheerbart was convinced that, unlike conventional means of waging war, which required the conquest of territory, air attacks could destroy civic and cultural centers well within the borders of countries in conflict. Scheerbart predicted, with perspicacity, that the devastation caused by air attacks on cities would be the greatest the world had ever seen.

The vision of an airship flying overhead described in the *Schwabischer Merkur* is rarely elicited in *The Gray Cloth*. Instead, like the Futurist Marinetti for whom the new perspective from the air allowed him "to break apart the old shackles of logic and plumb lines of the ancient way of thinking,"⁴⁰ Scheerbart suggests in *The Gray Cloth* that "the birds-eye view was accepted as the authoritative perspective."⁴¹ This view from the air, however, becomes one of capitalistic prominence and international privilege. As Peter Fritzsche has speculated, Germany from the air appeared to be "a vast Faustian workshop of machines and masses."⁴² He argues that the nationalism arising in the 20th century became "more compatible with industrialism and more and more popular in scope and temperament."⁴³

While Scheerbart believed that, as a replacement for nationalism, glass architecture was close to industry, and air travel would become more popular, he did not indicate that the "harmonious" design culture of the upper-middle classes would ever become more affordable to all. When forced to take a "public" airbus instead of Edgar's private airship, Clara snobbishly suggests to her friend Amanda that "you probably find the furnishings in this airbus quite wonderful. But to one such as I, who is accustomed to Edgar's airship, everything in this airbus is quite primitive"⁴⁴ This hearkens back to the allegations that the Werkbund failed to encourage the production of affordable objects. With the Werkbund's numerous publications of luxury airships and ocean liner interiors, it is little wonder that a critic of the 1914 exhibition



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Fig. 4. Bruno Taut, *Glass House*, 1914

claimed that no one “below the rank of schoolmaster or judicial clerk could aspire to own the items shown.”⁴⁵

With ironic and cynical precision in *The Gray Cloth*, Scheerbart confronts the militaristic intentions of the politics of architectural internationalism. He shifts aristocratic notions of imperialism and national identity toward a pacifistic and global colonization of territory by an international bourgeoisie whose lives were committed to achievements in the design of glass architecture. In fact, Krug seems to experience 20th-century architecture as the visitor to a 19th-century world’s fair, flowing from one country to another without passports or visas. To emphasize the far-reaching implications of such architectural internationalization, Scheerbart states through Edgar Krug at the very end of *The Gray Cloth*: “All that is beautiful on the face of the Earth. We find it all again in glass architecture. It is the culmination — a cultural peak!”⁴⁶ This final statement reveals not only where modernism had been, but where it would head over the course of the 20th century. The structure most thoroughly revealing Scheerbart’s architectural fantasy of translucent colored-glass walls was Taut’s Glass House, which was briefly exhibited in 1914.⁴⁷ After the war, however, Scheerbart’s vision is echoed in Walter Gropius’s 1919 manifesto for the Bauhaus: “Together let us desire, conceive, and create the new structure of the future, which will embrace architecture and sculpture and painting in one unity and which will one day rise toward heaven from the hands of a million workers like a crystal symbol of a new faith.”⁴⁸ Both Scheerbart and Gropius reflect the lofty goals set out by early architectural modernists. It is, however, through the fictional narrative of *The Gray Cloth*, that Scheerbart reveals the complexity and richness of association between national and global politics at the core of modern architecture in the twentieth century.

NOTES

¹ See V. R. Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War* 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), pp. 32-37.

² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

³ For an interesting and important argument on the importance of telegraphic and telephonic technologies in the diplomatic “July Crisis,” see Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 268.

⁴ Quoted in Gerhard Masur, *Imperial Berlin* (New York and London: Basic Books, 1970), p. 264.

⁵ This statement was made in 1909 on the occasion of the Kaiser’s anger that the director of the National Gallery, Hugo Tschudi requested to purchase works of the French impressionists. The request was denied. See Gerhard Masur, *Imperial Berlin*, p. 211.

⁶ The Werkbund arose out of a series of incidents surrounding the selection of certain artists and architects as the arbiters of national design standards. These began with Fritz Schumacher’s controversial decision to select a series of designers to design complete interiors, instead of selecting the producers as had been done in the past, for the Third German Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Dresden in 1906. See Stanford Anderson, “Deutscher Werkbund - the 1914 Debate: Hermann Muthesius versus Henry van de Velde,” in Ben Farmer and Hentje Louw, eds., *Companion to Contemporary Architectural Thought* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 462-3.

⁷ Quoted from Stanford Anderson, “Deutscher Werkbund,” p. 463.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 464.

⁹ Dirk Kocks argues for Muthesius’s great interest in the Color Show in his essay, “Deneken, Muthesius und die Farbenschau,” in Angelika Thiekötter, et al., eds., *Der westdeutsche Impuls 1900-1914 Kunst und Umweltgestaltung in Industriegebiet: Die Deutsche Werkbund-Ausstellung Köln 1914* [The West German Impulse 1900-1914 Art and the Environment of Production in the Field of Industry: The German Werkbund Exhibition. Cologne 1914] exhibition catalogue (Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1984), pp. 205-121. This is the most recent of very few attempts by scholars to deal with this work. An excellent source on describing the interior of the pavilion and its didactic program is found in a contemporary article written by a contributor to its design: Frederich Denekin, “Der Werkbund und die Farbe,” [The Werkbund and Color], in *Illustrierte Zeitung, Der deutsche Werkbund* (1914), pp. 17-18.

¹⁰ While not all participants in the Werkbund Exhibition were as close to its ideological core as Muthesius, Mark Jarzombek argues correctly that “certain theoretical speculations... by 1907 were not only well defined, but... had already degenerated into a powerful jargon.” See Mark Jarzombek, “The *Kunstgewerbe*, the *Werkbund*, and the Aesthetics of Culture in the Wilhelmine Period,” in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53 no. 1 (March 1994): pp. 7-19. Quote from page 8. For an excellent discussion of sponsorship of the *Deutsches Luxfer Prismen Syndikat*, see Dietrich Neumann, “‘The Century’s Triumph in Lighting’: The Luxfer Prism Companies and their Contribution to Early Modern Architecture,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 54 (March 1995) pp. 24-53.

¹¹ Scheerbart wrote the pithy epitaphs about glass that ran around the base of the dome of the Taut pavilion. In a letter to Richard Dehmel Scheerbart mentions a few of the epitaphs as well as the fact that Taut dedicated the pavilion to him. See Mechthild Rausch, ed. *70 Trillion Weltgrüsse*, pp. 464-6. Raynor Banham also mentions this fact in *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), p. 266. Scheerbart’s manifesto was first published as *Glasmarchitektur* (Berlin: Verlag Der Sturm, 1914). This work has been reprinted in German and translated into English in: *Paul Scheerbart and Bruno Taut, Glass Architecture/Alpine Architecture*, James Palmes and Shirley Palmer trans. (New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1972).

- ¹² This work was first published as Paul Scheerbar, *Das graue Tuch und Zehn Prozent Weiss. Ein Damenroman* (Berlin and München: Georg Mueller Verlag, 1914). This text has been reprinted as Paul Scheerbar, *Das graue Tuch und Zehn Prozent Weiss. Ein Damenroman* ed. Mechthild Rausch (München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1986). There is some speculation as to the circumstances under which Scheerbar wrote *The Gray Cloth*. See Mechthild Rausch's afterward in Scheerbar, *Das graue Tuch*, 149. In a letter written to Richard Dehmel of January 9, 1914, Scheerbar writes "A book 'Glass Architecture,' which I thought he [Müller] would certainly take, he rejected after 8 weeks in storage, at which time he maintained that the reader would not find it to be literature, but rather 'practical building suggestions! Ho Ho!'" See Mechthild Rausch, ed., Paul Scheerbar, *70 Trillionen Weltgrüsse: Eine Biographie in Briefen 1889-1915* [Paul Scheerbar, 70 Trillion World Greetings: A Biography in Letters 1889-1915] (Berlin: Argon, 1992), p. 458. Later, in a letter to Bruno Taut dated March 11, 1914, Scheerbar refers to *The Gray Cloth* as "Müllers Damenroman" [Müller's Ladies Novel]. Rausch ed., *70 Trillionen Weltgrüsse*, p. 468. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
- ¹³ As Scheerbar wrote in a July 1913 letter to Gottfried Heinersdorf, "Perhaps you know that I have already written a very great deal about glass architecture over the past twenty years. I would like to transform the walls of architecture to double walls of colored glass." Mechthild Rausch, ed., *70 Trillionen Weltgrüsse*, p. 455.
- ¹⁴ First published by Scheerbar's own newly created press as: Paul Scheerbar, *Das Paradies. Die Heimat der Kunst* (Berlin: Verlag deutscher Phantasten, 1893). See also Rausch's afterward to the 1986 reprint of Paul Scheerbar, *Das graue Tuch*, 149. The history of Scheerbar's literary life may be gleaned from a number of sources, none of which, however, presents a "complete" picture of the author's life and work. For the most recent and excellent study of Scheerbar and the only introduction to the writer's early years, see Mechthild Rausch, *Von Danzig ins Weltall: Paul Scheerbarts Anfangsjahre 1863-1895* (Munich: Edition Text +Kritik, 1997). Mechthild Rausch has also edited and written an afterward to Paul Scheerbar, Rausch, ed., *70 Trillionen Weltgrüsse*. The Scheerbar Archive in Steinweiler recently produced a very hard to find but extensive bibliography of all Scheerbar's work and other sources which have included his writings. This work is Uli Kohnle, *Paul Scheerbar Eine Bibliographie* (Steinweiler: Paul Scheerbar Archiv, 1994). A study of Scheerbar's architectural visions and their similarities to projects of later twentieth-century architects appears in an unpublished dissertation, Karl-Heinz Knupp, *Die Architekturphantasien Paul Scheerbarts: Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis von literarischer Fiktion und Architektur*, [The Architectural Fantasies of Paul Scheerbar: A Contribution to the Relation between Literary Fiction and Architecture] (unpublished dissertation, Universitaet Hamburg, 1980). The most recent examinations in English dedicated to Scheerbar and his work remain Rosemary Haag Bletter's unpublished dissertation, *Bruno Taut and Paul Scheerbar's Vision-Utopian Aspects of German Expressionist Architecture*, (unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1973), her two articles: "The Interpretation of the Glass Dream-Expressionist Architecture and the History of the Crystal Metaphor," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 40 (March 1981): pp. 20-43, and "Paul Scheerbar's Architectural Fantasies," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 34 (May 1975), pp. 83-97. Also in English, Dennis Sharp, ed., Paul Scheerbar and Bruno Taut, *Glass Architecture and Alpine Architecture*, James Palmes and Shirley Palmer, trans., (New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1972). I have recently completed the first English translation of *The Gray Cloth*.
- ¹⁵ Paul Scheerbar, *Münchhausen und Clarissa. Ein Berliner Roman* (Berlin: Österheld & Co., 1906). The Baron is also featured in two other works: Paul Scheerbar, *Flora Mohr. Eine Glasblumen-Novelle* (Prag im Herbst: K. u. K. Hofbuchdruckerei A. Haase, 1909) and Paul Scheerbar, *Das große Licht* (Leipzig: Dr. Sally Rabinowitz Verlag, 1912).
- ¹⁶ Although it is not at all certain that Scheerbar was well-travelled, the concept of the International World's Exhibitions was an appealing one to him. He invents a World's Fair at Luneburg Heath in Paul Scheerbar, *The Gray Cloth*, 120 to which Edgar Krug must send ten models for exhibition. Scheerbar also states: "I wanted to edit a brochure that reported on the glass buildings that should be constructed at the World's Exhibition in San Fransisco [The Panama-Pacific International Exhibition of 1915]. But I have understood that jokes would not help the matter. The Cologne Exhibition allows itself to be written about much more seriously." Letter to Gottfried Heinersdorff (7.25.13) found in Rausch, ed., *70 Trillionen Weltgrüsse*. p. 457.
- ¹⁷ *Lesabendio. Ein Asteroiden-Roman* (Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller Verlag, 1913).
- ¹⁸ *Lesabendio* was reprinted in Helmut Draws-Tychsen, ed., *Paul Scheerbar, Dichterische Hauptwerke* (Stuttgart: Henry Goverts Verlag, 1962). This particular passage may be found on page 528. For Walter Benjamin's comments on Paul Scheerbar and his particular fondness for this work, see Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, ed., *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin 1910-1940* Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson, trans. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 151.
- ¹⁹ Evidence of Scheerbar's intentions may be seen in a letter written on 11 July 1913 to Gottfried Heinersdorf: "I would most like to found a 'society for glass architecture' [*Gesellschaft für Glasarchitektur*]. It could start out looking after the propaganda and leave the [practical] execution for the future. I have so much to say, and in detail." Mechthild Rausch, ed., *70 Trillionen Weltgrüsse*. 455.
- ²⁰ Scheerbar wrote this to Richard Dehmel on 9 January 1914. See Mechthild Rausch, ed., *70 Trillionen Weltgrüsse*. p. 458.
- ²¹ For a brief discussion of the "Ladies Novel" as a "lighter genre" of literature, see Mechthild Rausch's afterward to the 1986 reprint of Paul Scheerbar, *Das graue Tuch*, p. 160.
- ²² Although much more study should be made of this, Scheerbar clearly uses the future as a filter that should be compared to that of Edward Bellamy and H. G. Wells. See Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000-1887* 4th ed. (New York: Random House, 1951), Jules Verne H. G. Wells, *Time machine* Patrick Parrinder ed. (New York : Oxford University Press, 1996).
- ²³ Scheerbar's use of humor was celebrated by Bruno Taut and German literary critics in the 1920s. Bruno Taut stated: "Only what is really meant in complete seriousness is expressed in jest. That is why one should very often read our *Glaspapa* Paul Scheerbar." Taken from Bruno Taut, "Glasarchitektur," *Die Glocke*, (1921), 1376. The reference was found in Angelika Thiekötter, et al., eds., *Kristallisationen, Splitterungen. Bruno Tauts Glashauss*, [Chrystalization, Fragmentation. Bruno Taut's Glass House.] (Basel, Berlin, Boston: Birkhaeuser Verlag, 1993), p. 91. In fact, the opening scene of *The Gray Cloth* was selected as the first of a series of prose fragments exemplary of German humor in Walther Petry, ed., *Humor der Nationen. Ausgewählte Prosa. Deutschland*, [Humor of Nations. Selected Prose. Germany.] (Berlin: Wertbuchhandel, 1925), pp. 273-291.
- ²⁴ For an excellent discussion of German architectural nationalism and internationalism, see Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cam-

bridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Quote taken from page 142.

²⁵ Paul Scheerbart, *Das graue Tuch*, pp. 7-10.

²⁶ See John E. Findling, *Chicago's Great World's Fairs* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 26. It is of interest to note that a Scheerbartian obsession with colors became a central issue later in Chicago later in the century at the Century of Progress Exhibition that opened on 27 May 1933. Hired to coordinate color, light and the landscape for the entire exhibition, Viennese architect, Joseph Urban installed several Scheerbartian ideas of building illumination and search-lights. See Findling, *Chicago's Great World's Fairs*, pp. 83-91. For more on the "White City" see David Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976). For a discussion of the admiration of America ingenuity and invention in German speaking countries around the turn of the century as well as the importance of the World Columbian Exhibition see Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 143-44.

²⁷ Scheerbart states: "But before the Hellenic civilization there were already many colourful glass ampullae and lustrous majolica tiles in the countries bordering the Euphrates and Tigris, a thousand years before Christ. *The Near East is thus the so-called cradle of glass culture.*" [emphasis mine]. Quoted from Dennis Sharp ed., *Glass Architecture and Alpine Architecture* James Palmes and Shirley Palmer trans. (New York: Praeger, 1972), p. 47.

²⁸ By contemporary accounts the Midway at the Chicago World's Fair, "The Teutonic and Celtic races were placed nearest to the White City; farther away was the Islamic world, East and West Africa; at the farthest end were the savage races, the African Dahomey and the North American Indian." Quoted in Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 65. For more on issues of inclusion and exclusion at the 1893 World's Fair, see Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1992), 80-94. It should also be noted that although there is no evidence that Scheerbart knew of Frank Lloyd Wright, the international design community was aware of this Chicago architect's work through publications by the Berlin publisher Wasmuth. These publications included: Frank Lloyd Wright, *Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe* [Studies and Executed Buildings] (Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1910) and Charles Robert Ashbee, *Frank Lloyd Wright; eine Studie zu Seiner Würdigung* [Frank Lloyd Wright: a Study towards his Appreciation] (Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1911).

²⁹ For this quotation by Schwarzer on Waentig's ideas on the United States, see Mitchell Schwarzer, *German Architectural Theory and the Search for Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 143 n. 51. Also see Heinrich Waentig, *Wirtschaft und Kunst* (Jena: Gustav Fisher, 1909).

³⁰ See Klaus-Juergen Sembach, ed., *1910 Halbzeit der Moderne. van de Velde, Behrens, Hoffman und die Anderen.* [Halftime of Modernity. van de Velde, Behrens, Hoffman and the Others] exhibition catalogue, (Stuttgart: Gerd Hatje, 1992), 35 especially for an image of the installation of a film projection in the large festival hall of the Paris Exposition of 1900. The image on

the screen is of two clowns throwing hats to one another.

³¹ Donald Albrecht, *Designing Dreams: Modern Architecture in the Movies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), p. xii.

³² Paul Scheerbart, *Das graue Tuch*, pp. 70-71.

³³ See Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 260.

³⁴ René Doumic, "L'Age du cinéma," *Revue des deux mondes* (1913), 923. This quote was found in Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*, 260 n.4.

³⁵ Paul Scheerbart, *Das graue Tuch*, pp. 93-4.

³⁶ The notion of flying and airships was also central to the Werkbund. For an excellent overview of German aviation during this period see Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992) I am indebted to Edward Eigen for directing me to this work. Evidence of the Werkbund's interest air travel may be seen in the *Der Verkehr*, [Transportation] *Jahrbuch des deutschen Werkbundes* (1914) which was dedicated to the integration of design and transportation technology.

³⁷ This quote is found in Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers*, pp. 11-12.

³⁸ Paul Scheerbart, *Das graue Tuch*, pp. 29-30.

³⁹ See Paul Scheerbart, "Die Entwicklung des Luftmilitarismus und die Auflösung der europäischen Landheere, Festungen und Seefloten" [The Development of Air Militarism and the Dissolution of Land Forces, Fortresses and Naval Fleets] in *Die Zukunft*, 18 (1910/11) Heft 20. This quotation and translation is found in Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*, p. 243.

⁴⁰ Quote from Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*, p. 245.

⁴¹ Paul Scheerbart, *Das graue Tuch*, p. 103.

⁴² Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers*, p. 6.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Paul Scheerbart, *Das graue Tuch*, pp. 122-3.

⁴⁵ The quotation is from Theodor Heuss, "Der Werkbund in Köln," *März*, VIII, No. 2 (1914), 910-11, found in Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund*, p. 73.

⁴⁶ Paul Scheerbart, *Das graue Tuch*, p. 246.

⁴⁷ It has been suggested by Dennis Sharp in his introduction to *Glass Architecture and Alpine Architecture*, p. 10, that the two met in 1913 through a mutual connection with Herwarth Walden's periodical, *Der Sturm*. Walden's Verlag Der Sturm published *Glasarchitektur* in 1914 after it had been rejected by Georg Müller during the previous year.

⁴⁸ Quoted from Rosemary Haag Bletter, "The Interpretation of the Glass Dream - Expressionist Architecture and the History of the Crystal Metaphor," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 40, no.1 (March 1981), p. 20 For a perceptive article on Benjamin's use of Scheerbart as a "lens" through which to view Le Corbusier, Oud, Adolf Loos, and the architects of the Bauhaus, see Detlef Mertins, "The Enticing and Threatening Face of Prehistory: Walter Benjamin and the Utopia of Glass," *Assemblage* 29 (April 1996), p. 13 and Detlef Mertins, "Walter Benjamin's 'tectonic' Unconscious," *Any* 14 (1996), pp. 28-35.