

# Venice and New York

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In truth, New York is — at least from the 1890s onward — an allegory of the Venice of modern times. It may prove useful to recall the words of Nietzsche: “One hundred profound solitudes form the whole of the city of Venice — this is its spell. An image for the man of the future.” It is not the history, not the images pregnant with meanings, not the peace of a refound “community” — nor the slow decay of values — that constitute for Nietzsche the fascination of Venice. This resides instead in the prophecy that the city of lagoons launches to the future: the city as a system of solitudes, as a place wherein the loss of identity is made an institution, wherein the maximum formalism of its structures gives rise to a code of behavior dominated by “vanity” and “comedy.” From such a viewpoint, New York is already a “new Venice.” The fragments of the future contained in the *Serenissima* of Nietzsche have already exploded into the metropolis of total indifference and therefore of the anguished consumption of multiplied signs.

— Manfredo Tafuri, “The Ashes of Jefferson,” 1976/80<sup>1</sup>

I can hear you saying:

He talks of America,

He understands nothing about it.

He has never been there.

But believe you me:

You understand me perfectly well when I talk of America.

And the best thing about America is

That we understand it.

— Bertolt Brecht, *A Reader for City Dwellers*, 1929<sup>2</sup>

In the mid-1970s the vanguards of American and Italian architecture, more specifically New York and Venice, experienced a consequential attraction for each other. Two seminal publications had appeared in 1966— Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* and Aldo Rossi's *L'architettura della città*. At the time these were unrelated events; that postmodernism had its major heralds in America and Italy was largely a function of different historical conditions. More anticipatory of the transatlantic relationship to occur were Peter Eisenman's pilgrimages to Terragni's buildings in Como in the early 1960s, accompanied by Colin Rowe in the role of Virgil. The most ambiguous of the Italian rationalists thus entered into the genealogy of the New York Five, formed around Eisenman in 1969. Still, in 1973, when Rossi, in charge of the international architecture section at the XV Milan Triennale, included the mannered late modernism of the Five in an exhibition entitled *Architettura razionale*, the case for a worldwide *tendenza* seemed superficial, if not contradictory.

It was Manfredo Tafuri's essay “L'Architecture dans le Boudoir: The language of criticism and the criticism of language,” published one year later in the third issue of *Oppositions*, that persuasively theorized a convergence between these streams and marked the beginning of a relationship between the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (IAUS) in Manhattan, directed by Eisenman, and the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (IUAV), its history department chaired by Tafuri.<sup>3</sup> In that essay, originally delivered as a lecture at Princeton University,<sup>4</sup> Tafuri took the work of James Stirling, Aldo Rossi, and the New York Five as paradigms of a retreat by contemporary architects from the “domain of the real” into the “universe of signs”, ultimate symptoms of a “widespread attitude intent on repossessing the unique character of the object by removing it from its economic and functional context and... placing it in parentheses within the flux of objects generated by the production system.” Tafuri characterized such activity as “architecture dans le boudoir.”<sup>5</sup>

Taking his title from the Marquis de Sade's *Philosophie dans le boudoir*, Tafuri affirmed the “sadistic” insight that in the erotic utopia of the boudoir, everything must speak exclusively, cruelly, of sexuality; likewise, in the domain of architecture, only the imposition of maximum terror, the “supreme constraint of a geometric structure,” could produce an effect of transgressing limits, of absolute power.<sup>6</sup> Thus the “knights of purity” constructed their myths of autonomy: “Today, he who is willing to make architecture speak is forced to rely on materials empty of any and all meaning: he is forced to reduce to degree zero all architectural ideology, all dreams of social function and any utopian residues... [T]hose architects who from the late fifties until today have tried to reconstruct a universal discourse for their discipline have felt the need to make a new ‘morality of content’ [morale del contegno]. Their purism or their rigorism is that of someone driven to a desperate action that cannot be justified except from within itself. The words of their vocabulary, gathered from the desolate lunar landscape remaining after the sudden conflagration of their grand illusions, lie perilously on that sloping plane which separates the world of reality from the magic circle of language.”<sup>7</sup>

If this last image calls to mind the black and white photographs of Eisenman's House II perched atop a snowy hillside published in *Five Architects* in 1972, such an attitude, in Tafuri's view, only betrayed the inability of architects to draw the necessary conclusion from the fate of the modernist avant-garde: “The return to language is a



proof of failure."<sup>8</sup> Tafuri concluded his essay by reprising Walter Benjamin's argument in "The Author as Producer," admonishing the architect as well as the architectural critic to redefine architecture's field of action *within* the cycle of capitalist production, to function "not as a specialist in language, but rather as a *producer*."<sup>9</sup>

Tafuri's essay contained *in nuce* much of the critical position that would successively unfold in the English translations of his three most influential books, which would appear out of sequence and staggered with respect to their Italian publication over the next twelve years — *Architecture and Utopia* (1976), *Theories and History of Architecture* (1979), and *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (1987).<sup>10</sup> Yet for those outside the inner circle of the IAUS, this essay, and the ones that followed in subsequent issues of *Oppositions*, occasioned a certain culture shock. Theoretical discourse in American architecture had always been meager, lagging well behind other aesthetic and intellectual disciplines. This partly explains the success of the few exceptions, like the books of Jane Jacobs and Venturi published in the 1960s, which were polemical rather than scholarly, or those of Christopher Alexander and Kevin Lynch, which pursued objectively verifiable methodologies. In most schools a professional orientation was ingrained, and the relationship between theory and practice unfocused. In this milieu, the IAUS, founded in 1967 and dedicated to design education, research, exhibitions, and publishing, was, despite its mainstream sponsorship, an exception; and for American architects with a more theoretical or European bent, as well as for the community of foreign architects passing through New York, it filled an important vacuum.

Not surprisingly, on the three-man editorial board of *Oppositions*, which the IAUS began publishing in 1973, Eisenman was the only member born in the United States. Eisenman was, as mentioned, an Italophile whose "discovery" of Gruppo Sette had major impact on his work; he was also a collector of avant-garde incunabula. Although at the time of the IAUS's founding he was involved in several pragmatic projects,<sup>11</sup> his interest already lay in a more abstract and conceptual type of design, which he would pursue over the next decade in a series of numbered houses (some for clients) entitled "Cardboard Architecture."<sup>12</sup> This work reflected his obsession with the formal experiments of the European avant-gardes as well as with the transformational grammar developed by the American linguist Noam Chomsky. By nature iconoclast and impresario, Eisenman saw history as a succession of radical innovations, and he aimed to insert his own work into this avant-garde tradition. By the mid-1970s he was advancing a theory of historical "misreading" — not yet in Derridean terms, since Derrida had not entered American architectural consciousness at this date, but in those of the American literary critic Harold Bloom.<sup>13</sup> Bloom's concept of "swerving," a view of literary history as a process of creative misinterpretation — "strong poets make [poetic] history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves"<sup>14</sup> — served to license Eisenman's inventive analyses of Terragni's buildings, which fictively reconstructed their design

process, as well as his ex post facto diagrams of the design process of his own houses. It also sanctioned his oedipal relationship to his modernist father figures, including Rowe. For Eisenman Tafuri likewise represented a formidable European intellectual whose critical attention to his work validated its seriousness in America as well as Europe, and, more perversely, a "strong" theorist and historian who could serve as a worthy antagonist for Eisenman's radically autonomous architecture — another father to swerve from.

The other two editors on the original board of *Oppositions* were the Englishman Kenneth Frampton and the Argentine Mario Gandelsonas; a third editor, Anthony Vidler, joined the board with issue 7. Each shared a somewhat different set of intellectual affinities with Tafuri, but they too were receptive to his writings in *Oppositions*, if for less complexly autobiographical reasons than Eisenman.<sup>15</sup> What is apparent is that Tafuri's writings functioned differently for each editor while at the same time helping them to unify their program.

● On the other hand, for the wider public, Tafuri's writings, and the general resistance of American culture to "Marxist" interpretations, presented significant difficulties. This is registered in a typical response to "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir": "Perhaps if the article had been translated into *English*, its meanings would have been clearer, at least to me. Whatever language that was didn't make comprehension easy. ... Italians seem bent on complication, as if their obvious love for luxury objects can be reconciled with dialectical materialism only by the greatest effort. Recent housing in China would seem more compatible with Marxism."<sup>16</sup> This comment is worth quoting not so much to lend credence to a view of American culture as philistine as to dramatize the inherent foreignness of Tafuri's discourse for the American reader. Nor, indeed, was the least problem poor translation and editing: grasping Tafuri's meaning in English was frequently like scaling the Tower of Babel.<sup>17</sup>

Notwithstanding, Tafuri's writing, Aldo Rossi's work, and references to the Venice School and the Tendenza filled the pages of *Oppositions* with increasing frequency. *Oppositions* 5 (summer 1976) is a veritable Italian issue, with more than half its pages devoted to presentations of Rossi's work and to an essay by Tafuri on the New York Five, "American Graffiti: Five x Five = Twenty-five."<sup>18</sup> In this essay — the subtitle a reference to an exhibition staged in Moscow in 1921 by five artists and architects which served to define the Constructivist aesthetic — Tafuri returned to the "boudoir" phenomenon. However, he now characterized the self-referential and elementarist language of the Five as a specifically American manifestation: "It is nevertheless certain that the attitude of the Five includes nostalgia as an instrumentality; be it a desperate attempt to recapture those avant-gardes which America experienced only in its superficial aspects, or be it an exploration of those methods which are the antithesis of the American pragmatic tradition."<sup>19</sup>

Tafuri thus explained the historical contradictions of the American avant-garde. In his view, the Five's formal experiments — from those of Hejduk, seen as most ab-



stract, to those of Meier, as most realistic — were not merely “revivals” or “survivals” of modernist ideology; they were rather “dissections” of that earlier utopia, acknowledging, even if unconsciously, its limits. It was this that made their work both “painful” and “cruel,” inauthentic and sincere; and ultimately subject for the analyst’s attention: “It is exactly for this experience of the limit, that is to say, for their excesses, that they interest us; excess is always a bearer of consciousness.”<sup>20</sup>

Herein also lies an explanation of Tafuri’s own fascination with this American work, indeed his preference for it over more “operative” practices.<sup>21</sup> It is instructive to compare Tafuri’s interpretation of the Five to that made by Colin Rowe in his introduction to their book. Although Rowe arrived at an equivalent judgment of the modern movement’s failure from a non-Marxist perspective, he saw the New York architects not as nostalgic so much as engaged in exorcising deep-seated guilt feelings: “guilt about the products of the mind — felt to be comparatively insignificant, guilt about high culture — felt to be unreal, guilt about art — the most extreme anxiety to disavow the role of private judgment in any analytical or synthetic enterprise.”<sup>22</sup>

In other words, for the Englishman Rowe, who by this time was an insider to the American scene, the new architectural formalism in America was motivated by a desire to institute a “high” art and culture within American architecture. At the same time, such a desire had to be recast in a way that was “safe for capitalism.” In this sense, the phenomenon of the Five was indeed a repetition or “simulacrum,” but not because of the group’s appropriation of a modernist language. Rather, it was a recurrence of the way American architecture had received the modern movement in 1932 at the International Style show, or of Philip Johnson’s apostasy vis-à-vis Miesian orthodoxy in the 1950s, or, in the art world, of Clement Greenberg’s canonization of Abstract Expressionism.<sup>23</sup> In each case, American formalism triumphed by bleaching modernist aesthetics of their ideological and utopian content.

In retrospect, Rowe’s and Tafuri’s readings are not entirely incongruent. But their differences illustrate to what extent Tafuri’s perspective on America was that of an outsider. For Rowe, the American debate inevitably turned on questions of high and low culture, intellectualism and populism. For Tafuri, not unlike Adorno, popular culture — including the work of Venturi and his admirers — was for the most part not to be dignified by serious discussion, and the concept of avant-gardism meaningless outside of its political context. It is hardly surprising, then, that Tafuri’s “autopsy” was again received with perplexity in certain American quarters.

*Oppositions* 11 (winter 1977) presented two more essays by Tafuri, “The Dialectics of the Avant-Garde: Piranesi and Eisenstein” and “Giuseppe Terragni: Subject and ‘Mask,’” the latter writing revealing Eisenman’s potent effect on Tafuri’s imagination at this date.<sup>25</sup> Finally, *Oppositions* 17 (summer 1979) contained Tafuri’s disquisition on his own critical method, “The Historical ‘Project,’” which he would republish as the introduction to *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*. Beyond these five essays,

*Oppositions* would publish a review by Yve-Alain Bois of the French edition of *Theories and History*,<sup>26</sup> and an article by Massimo Cacciari entitled “Eupalinos or Architecture,” billed as a review of Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co’s *Modern Architecture*, but more a Heideggerian meditation on the unpoetical nature of modern dwelling.<sup>27</sup> It also published contributions by other members of the Venice School who had come into the American orbit, including Giorgio Ciucci, Georges Teyssot, and especially Dal Co, beginning with the latter’s essay on Richard Meier in *Oppositions* 9. In addition, Tafuri wrote introductory essays for Eisenman’s book *Houses of Cards*<sup>28</sup> and for the first of the IAUS exhibition catalogues, *Massimo Scolari: Architecture between Memory and Hope* (1980), and he contracted for *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* to be translated into English in the *Oppositions* Books series.<sup>29</sup> Nor does this enumeration take into account Tafuri’s impact on others writing in the journal and associated with the IAUS over the years.<sup>30</sup>

More generally, the second half of the 1970s saw increasingly close ties forged between American and European architecture, with the newly established New York/Venice axis central to many exchanges. The 1976 Biennale, organized by Vittorio Gregotti, was titled *Europa/America: Architetture urbane, alternative suburbane*, and paired a roster of fourteen European architects with eleven Americans. During the course of a panel discussion entitled “Quale movimento moderno,” Aldo van Eyck, among the Europeans exhibiting, launched a bitter attack on Tafuri, who happened to be in the audience; Tafuri’s reply and the ensuing debate made it clear that the major divide was no longer across the Atlantic, but rather between the generation of Team X, heirs of CIAM, and a new generation in Italy and America, inasmuch as the latter shared a “posthumanist” conception of architecture.<sup>31</sup>

In fact, this was the moment of postmodernism’s breakthrough. Tafuri himself never accepted the term *postmodern*, insisting on *hypermodern* — which might seem petulant in retrospect given that his thinking belongs to the critique of positivistic humanism that characterizes this intellectual shift.<sup>32</sup> At its inception, however, postmodernism, especially as defined by promoters like Paolo Portoghesi, Charles Jencks, and Robert Stern, connoted not only a superficial approach to history, but the advent of a schismatic stage of capitalist development. For Tafuri the first was anathema, the second historically untenable. Nonetheless, for American discourse, the fact was that “history” had returned to the architectural consciousness, and with the vengeance of the repressed. Despite the differences separating Tafuri’s idea of history from that of Stern, say, or Venturi, they were two poles of one debate. Tafuri’s writing thus increasingly entered in dialectic with the nostalgic view of history now becoming prevalent.

In this context, a generative event was the Beaux-Arts exhibition staged by the Museum of Modern Art in 1975. Initially received by many around the IAUS and elsewhere as a betrayal by the museum’s architecture director, Arthur Drexler, of everything MoMA had stood for



since its founding, it was ultimately validated as a necessary act of self-criticism and a sign of the new sensibility emerging in architecture. A special issue of *Oppositions* was given over to "Paris under the Academy: City and Ideology." Edited by Vidler, it owed much to the latter's reading of Tafuri.<sup>33</sup> Vidler concluded his opening editorial in an unmistakably Tafurian vein, calling for "the investigation of the recent past as an instrument for the analysis and criticism of the present," citing the importance of a new historical understanding for grasping "the impossible contradictions of our own practice."

The publication in 1979 of translations of two more books emanating from the Venice School, Tafuri and Dal Co's *Modern Architecture* and a collaborative volume by Ciucci, Dal Co, Mario Manieri Elia, and Tafuri, *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal*, further established the new critical historiography being practiced in Italy and reflected back to the "new Venice" an image of American architecture and urbanism that it had not seen before.<sup>34</sup> The lens, as already suggested, was not without its distortions. Tafuri's research on the American city dated back to 1969-70, when he and other faculty members at the IUAV organized a series of courses dedicated to this subject. The project was conceived as a counterpoint to the school's work on Soviet urbanism, product of modernity's other great "world system," and reflected the authors' judgment that a history of the American city had not yet been written. Tafuri's lengthy essay for the book, "The Disenchanted Mountain: The Skyscraper and the City," was based, like the others in the volume, on an impressive amount of philological research, but largely written from an armchair in Venice. In fact, apart from sporadic visits, Tafuri was to have limited firsthand experience of the United States over the years.<sup>35</sup> This fact is not insignificant; and although we are here concerned primarily with Tafuri's reception in America rather than his view of it, the two subjects are not unrelated. It does not seem an accident that Tafuri's characteristic thematics of *distance* so insistently color his view of America.

Thus, in "The Disenchanted Mountain," Tafuri approached the American skyscraper by comparing European and American conceptions of it. Contrasting the respective submissions to the Chicago Tribune competition, he observed that for the European entrants, "America as seen from Europe appears far more a literary myth than an objective reality."<sup>36</sup> Yet his own analysis of the negative course of capitalist development within the American city was not immune to like preconceptions. In richly metaphoric language, Tafuri portrayed the skyscraper as an artificial and ultimately antiurban excrescence attempting to dominate "the unnatural forest of the metropolis."<sup>37</sup> The skyscraper reappears throughout in Tafuri's writing as a desperate attempt to control the city's anarchic forces of speculation and competition, and thus an "entity that remains aloof from the city,"<sup>38</sup> an allegory of estrangement, an exceptional typology, a pure sign. Its ultimate avatar is Mies van der Rohe's Seagram building. The latter's glacial "silence" became Tafuri's quintessential symbol and symptom of architecture's

protest against the urban dynamic,<sup>39</sup> and a critical act in Karl Kraus's sense: "He who has something to say, step forward and be silent."<sup>40</sup>

Tafuri would draw on the same research, and the same thematics, in another essay on the American city of the 1920s, "The New Babylon: The 'Yellow Giants' and the Myth of Americanism." In that essay, strategically placed between chapters on the Soviet city and the city in Weimar Germany in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*,<sup>41</sup> he posed the question: "In considering American culture, must we not adopt a different viewpoint from which to evaluate the utopia of the avant-garde?"<sup>42</sup>

Tafuri never resolved this question. At times he interpreted American architecture and urbanism as *other* with respect to European culture, at times, as in the allegory of the "new Venice" that weaves through "The Ashes of Jefferson," as its *semblable* — or in any case, its historical destiny. "The Ashes of Jefferson" is the rhetorical climax of Tafuri's writing on America, and as the final chapter of *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, culminates the avant-garde "adventures" whose history he traces in that book. The essay is an attempt to resolve the dialectic he had identified earlier between Washington D. C. and New York:<sup>43</sup> between the democratic idealism of Thomas Jefferson and Louis Kahn, on the one hand, and the pragmatism of the New York skyscraper architects, on the other. With references to Melville's *Billy Budd* and Twain's *Innocents*, the architecture of the 1970s in New York was now presented as a poker game in which "there is no hope for architecture to influence structures or relations of production."<sup>44</sup> Formalism was, once again, a futile effort to counter architecture's destiny as a "negligible object," evidence of a Worringerian "fear in the face of reality";<sup>45</sup> to ward off such anguish, architecture indulged in "an exaltation of its own apartness."<sup>46</sup> Tafuri now extended this judgment not only to the "Whites," but to the "Grays" and the "exiles" as well.<sup>47</sup> The energies condensed in New York were thus "emblems of a general malaise":<sup>48</sup> "In the 'new Venice' — allegory of a general human condition — it is necessary to wear a mask to 'save one's soul.'"<sup>49</sup>

In light of this conclusion, it should not be surprising that the thematics of distancing, alienation, withdrawal, silence, and masquerade that figure so obsessively in Tafuri's reading of the American skyscraper, and also mark his interpretation of the compensatory evasions of the New York avant-gardes, are the same as those that permeate his work as a whole. Like his reading of the European tradition, Tafuri's reading of American architecture is driven by a teleological view of history as tragedy, by a global theory of the fate of the modern metropolis. Within this perspective, differences in context are variations on the theme.

On the other hand, Tafuri's preoccupation with New York must also be understood more specifically as an "inclination toward the other," an attempt to breach the oceanic "historic space" between Europe and America.<sup>50</sup> In his pursuit of an explosive confrontation between myths and reality, words and things, the problem of "critical distance" found a geographic materialization. His



theory of the New York avant-garde was an attempt to comprehend the convergence of parallel lines. Indeed, at no other time did New York architecture seem so suspended between Europe and the rest of America: from an American perspective, the New York architects appeared snobbishly oriented toward Europe, from a European perspective they appeared to have strayed from their own culture. The position, as Tafuri sensed, was profoundly ambiguous.<sup>51</sup>

Connections between the new and the old Venice strengthened as the polemical differences represented by "Venice" and "Rome" sharpened. The latter, which can roughly be correlated to the differences between, in Italy, Tafuri's position and Portoghesi's, came to the fore in 1977-78 with the exhibition *Roma interrotta*, which proposed modifications to the fabric of Rome according to a map made in 1748 by Nolli — a map that the Venturis had "adapted" six years earlier to Las Vegas parking lots — and brought together the prime international exponents of the neohistoricist tendency.<sup>52</sup> In response, in summer of 1978, the IUAV invited New York architects Eisenman, Hejduk, and Raimund Abraham (all associated with Cooper Union School of Architecture) back to Venice to take part in a seminar and exhibition dedicated to elaborating a series of proposals for the Cannaregio area of that city.<sup>53</sup> It is noteworthy that of the Europeans involved in these events, only Rossi took part in both. Eisenman, working for several weeks in Venice,<sup>54</sup> produced a project that would be pivotal in his development. Paying a heretical homage to Le Corbusier's unbuilt project for the Venice hospital on the adjacent site, his scheme advanced an iconoclastic urbanism which he defined specifically by what it was not: it was not positivistic in the Corbusian sense; it was not "mimetic," "narrative," "Euclidean," or "vertebrate." Nor was it, in this city of *preesistenza ambientale*, "contextual." Ever in search of a novel methodology — Eisenman's references were now to topological sheets and Calvino's *Invisible Cities* — the "wicked architect" here laid the groundwork for much of what was to come in his work: the L-fragments of House 11a, the Fin d'Ou T Hou S, Guardiola; the site excavations and virtual projections of Berlin and Wexner, and so on. Radically — dialectically — antihistorical, Eisenman's work staked its place in the genealogy of architectural avant-gardism "from Piranesi to the 1970s."

For Hejduk, too, the extended encounter with Venice was consequential, and the 13 Watchtowers of Cannaregio produced for the exhibition (in his case from New York) marked his full evolution from the elementarist wit of his earlier houses to a narrative and autobiographical mood close to Rossi. In a text for the catalogue he commented on Venice's impact on his work, stating, "in these past four years my architecture has moved from the 'Architecture of Optimism' to what I call the 'Architecture of Pessimism.'" <sup>55</sup> But if Tafuri's shadow loomed large for American architects still emerging in the mid-1970s from the formalist basis of late modern architecture, by the 1980s, as neoconservative ideology took hold and the economy expanded, American architects with work on their drafting tables had less use for melancholy poetics

and diagnoses of their own futility. Poststructuralism, pleurably immersed in its "magic circle" of textuality, gained currency in academia, and the intellectual axis that had connected New York to Venice shifted to Paris. Bernard Tschumi's invitation to Jacques Derrida to participate with Eisenman in his park of follies at La Villette brought the French philosopher into the orbit of vanguard architecture, and Eisenman moved on to embrace a new father figure as "Deconstructivism," a mongrel of Derridean deconstruction and Russian constructivism, filled the void left by the divagations of the New York Five.<sup>56</sup>

Meanwhile, Tafuri too had moved on. The evolution that had occurred in his work between 1968 and 1980 was profound, and hardly unaffected by poststructuralism as well as by his own intellectual crises. If Tafuri could still adhere to a traditional Marxian definition when he wrote in the Note to the second Italian edition of *Theories and History*, "I use the term *ideology* specifically as the structure of the false intellectual conscience [sic],"<sup>57</sup> during the next decade he would abandon that conception, writing in the introduction to *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, "To define ideology *tout court* as the expression of a false intellectual consciousness would be totally useless."<sup>58</sup> Now, on the heels of Foucault, Althusser, Lacan, and Ernst Cassirer, he came to see ideology more as a form of socially necessary symbolic representation — even if, as such, it no less urgently required the critical historian's demystification. But beyond his decision to focus more on Renaissance studies than modern — a shift touted in the architectural press as an abandonment — such significant developments in his work, including a progressive disenchantment with the American work that had intrigued him earlier<sup>59</sup>, went largely unperceived by American readers. This, as suggested, was in part because of the way his books became available in English; throughout the 1980s, *Architecture and Utopia* continued to be his best-known statement.<sup>60</sup>

Ironically, in fact, completely unrelated to his own evolution and even in a way contradicting it, Tafuri's reception in America underwent another kind of change in the 1980s. If in the 1970s the reading of his work was bound up with his critique of modernism and the renewal of interest in history and theory, in the following decade it would be more connected with his implicit critique of postmodernism and his methodology of ideological criticism. This rereading was spurred by a symposium held in 1982 under the auspices of the IAUS by a group of "younger" architects and critics called Revisions.<sup>61</sup> The symposium and the resulting publication were the culmination of the group's year-long study of the relationship between architecture and ideology.<sup>62</sup>

Once again, Tafuri — his writings — served as critical interlocutor for American architecture's evasion of troubling social and economic realities. Among the invited speakers at the symposium was the American literary critic and theorist Fredric Jameson, who presented a paper entitled "Architecture and the Critique of Ideology."<sup>63</sup> Here, in an acute analysis of what he termed "dialectical historiography," Jameson pointed out similarities be-



tween Tafuri's critique of ideology, Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music*, and Barthes's *Writing Degree Zero*, equating the three in intellectual intensity as well as implacability. He also attempted, from his own Marxist vantage point, to overcome what he saw as the political impasse of Tafuri's work, "scandalously" suggesting that its pessimism was determined by the same problematic that gave rise to its opposite, the affirmative and celebratory postmodernism of Venturi. He concluded by postulating (in very vague terms) a Gramscian "alternative." Three years later Jameson would return to Tafuri in another influential paper, "The Politics of Theory: Ideological Positions in the Postmodern Debate."<sup>64</sup> There he situated Tafuri as both an "antimodernist" and an "anti-postmodernist" with respect to several other current positions.<sup>65</sup> Tafuri would no doubt have been hostile to Jameson's highly oversimplified schema, inasmuch as he not only refused all facile attributions with respect to his own cultural affiliations, but rejected conventionalizing historical categories and nominations. Nonetheless, Jameson's formulation had the effect, along with his previous essay, of establishing the polemical import of Tafuri's thought within the American debate on postmodernism. It also served to bring it for the first time out of the specialized area of architecture into the arena of general cultural and historical studies.

For better or worse, such has been the theoretical framework for Tafuri's reception within American academic and cultural discourse since the mid-1980s.<sup>66</sup> In the 1990s, as the pastiche phase of postmodernism recedes and as poststructuralism shifts from being the latest intellectual fashion to a working theory inflected by other theoretical inputs (for example, post-Frankfurt School interpretations, psychoanalysis, feminism), Tafuri continues to be read in America with much seriousness — if at times tendentiously or idiosyncratically — by a new generation of critics, historians, and students. Now that translations of Tafuri's writings on the Renaissance and of books by his close associates are becoming available, and with new critical exegeses, American readers may better understand the scope and context of his thought.<sup>67</sup>

It only seems fitting to conclude — as a message in a bottle to all "interpreters" and in view of past and future readings, misreadings, and swerves — by appending some comments on the subject of Tafuri's reception in America by Tafuri himself. The *Revisions* publication had included a first English translation of Tafuri's essay "U.S.S.R. — Berlin: From Populism to 'Constructivist International,'" and following it, my own postscript entitled

"Critical History and the Labors of Sisyphus." Here I attempted to reconcile Tafuri's view of the relationship between architectural criticism and practice in light of the apparent contradictions between the (psycho)analytical method of history outlined in "The Historical 'Project'" and the more "militant" assault on ideology in his earlier writings. After receiving a copy of the book, Tafuri sent me the following letter:

*"I have received Architecture Criticism Ideology and I thank you sincerely."*

*I have read your essay attentively, and contrary to my custom, I would like to make some observations. Contrary to my custom: in fact, like Benjamin, I think it is better — to eschew gossip — not to consider misunderstandings: one who writes runs the risk of distortion, given that he is himself an interpreter of himself. However: I have the impression that you have fabricated a Tafuri who is a little too different from the one that I know. First of all: I do not believe that ideology is an enemy. That which we call ideology we might call — it would be better — representation, and since humanity cannot do without representations — the 'symbolic forms' of Cassirer — thus, in order not to bear this burden unconsciously, the need for 'analysts.'*

*The historian is only an analyst. I do not believe that he has a privileged status, nor does he lead armies, nor do battle with castles in the air. The obsession that is attributed to me to conquer through history what the architect may not confront appears to me a misinterpretation owed to 'American' cultural prejudices. I do not intend, in fact, by the term 'political' a partisan engagement or direct intervention. It is, however, typical for every historian to know that every discipline acts on its own, within the ever more intricate microphysics of power. And if architecture has its powers, history has others. Moreover my criticism is directed not at architecture in itself, but at its oversteppings of meaning, its attempts to exceed limits. To know limits is already a good deal, and history can contribute to that. As you see, 'revolution' is not among my thoughts.*

*Etymologically, revolution (revolutio) signifies 'return,' and is related to the perfection of the origin. From Hegel on, such revolution is understood as impossible: once it has completed its cycle, the Spirit is condemned to repeat: is condemned to the interruption of tradition and to the always-the-same of the 'new.' This is what repeats itself the new, which claims to be absolute (= ab-solutus, absolved from).*

*Consequently, my criticism has navigated for many years now on the long waves of history. What is certain is that illusions of earthly palingenesis or epiphanies — revolutions — have always been extraneous to my point of view. I do not believe that this is pessimism or nihilism. Otherwise, I would not believe in an activity that constantly modifies the given coordinates without permitting, at the same time, the direction of one's own actions. (Thus my critique of the 'project!')*

*I realize that I am not easy to schematize, but if American culture wants to understand me, why not make an effort to abandon facile typologies (Marxism, negative thought, etc.)? Another thing that strikes me is that those who write about me in the U.S.A. never put things into their historical context: 1973 is not 1980, is not 1985...*

*I hope that these confused clarifications of mine do not offend you. they are written only to demonstrate how distant the personage that you have constructed is from the one who lives, changes every day, and works as a historian by profession (not a historian of architecture, but also a historian of architecture).*

*Thank you again, and a warm greeting."<sup>68</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. 291; orig. in French in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, August-September 1976.

<sup>2</sup> *Aus den Gesängen über die Grossstädte*, in Bertolt Brecht *Poems*, ed. and trans. John Willett and Ralph Manheim (London: Methuen, 1976), p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> The program, polemics, and personalities at the IAUS and on the

American scene were well publicized in Italian and international magazines in the early 1970s. Note in particular the double issue of *Casabella*, no. 359-60 (1971), on which the IAUS collaborated, "The City as an Artifact." Instrumental in bringing an aspect of the Italian context to American attention was a major exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1972, *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*, curated by

Emilio Ambasz, to the catalogue of which Tafuri contributed an article, "Design and Capitalist Utopia."

<sup>4</sup> In April 1974 as part of a lecture series entitled "Practice, Theory and Politics in Architecture." The invitation to Princeton came from Diana Agrest, who was at the time on the Princeton faculty as well as a fellow of the IAUS. Agrest was apparently one of the first architects in the United States to become

aware of Tafuri's work, having come across his *Theories and History of Architecture* in Italian, and she was responsible for introducing him to those in the IAUS circle, including Mario Gandelsonas, Anthony Vidler, and Eisenman, during the session at Princeton. This was Tafuri's second trip to America, and Agrest recalls that as a member of the Communist Party he was granted only a three-day visa. On the third day he visited



the IAUS and took part in an editorial meeting of *Oppositions*, and Agrest took him to Rockefeller Center and other sites in Manhattan. See a forthcoming publication by Princeton Architectural Press, edited by Agrest, containing a record of the discussion that followed Tafuri's Princeton lecture.

<sup>5</sup> "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir," trans. Victor Caliendo, *Oppositions* 3 (May 1974), p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Foucault's influence on this essay of Tafuri's is crucial. On Sade, see especially "A Preface to Transgression" and "Language to Infinity," in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, Cornell Univ. Press, 1977).

<sup>7</sup> "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir," p. 38. "Morale del contegno" should be translated "morality of containment" or "morality of restraint": this is an example of the mistranslation pervasive in Tafuri's writings in English (see below).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*, trans. Barbara Luigia La Penta (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976; Italian ed., 1973); *Theories and History of Architecture*, trans.

Giorgio Verrecchia from the 1976 Italian ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1979, and London: Granada, 1980; orig. Italian ed., 1968); *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trans.

Pellegrino d'Acerno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987; Italian ed., 1980).

"L'Architecture dans le Boudoir" became chapter 8 of *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*.

<sup>11</sup> Including a proposal with Michael Graves for redevelopment of the waterfront on the west side of Manhattan above 125th Street. See *The New City: Architecture and Urban Renewal*, exhibition catalogue (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967), pp. 36-41.

<sup>12</sup> The source of the term "cardboard architecture" was Frank Lloyd Wright, who thus attacked the abstract and mechanistic qualities of European modern architecture in the name of his more "authentically" American organic architecture.

<sup>13</sup> Bloom's book *The Anxiety of Influence* was published in 1973; *A Map of Misreading* would appear in 1975.

<sup>14</sup> Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p. 5. Bloom's theory of swerving, which is intertextual, must also be distinguished from the

"knight's move" to which Tafuri makes repeated reference; Tafuri takes the latter from Shklovsky, who thus characterizes art's obliqueness or surreality with respect to reality. See Tafuri, "The Uncertainties of Formalism: Viktor Šklovskij and the Denuding of Art," in *On the Methodology of Architectural History*, ed. Demetri Porphyrios (London: Architectural Design, 1981), pp. 73-

77, as well as the introduction to *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Frampton, in his fidelity to the "unfinished project" of modernism, would ultimately reject the Nietzschean negativity of the Venice School for a more Habermasian concept of resistance, yet like Tafuri he was influenced by both Frankfurt School thought and Heidegger. For insight into the differences between Frampton's and Tafuri's approach to the history of modern architecture, see "Architecture and 'Poverty,'" a review by Tafuri of Frampton's *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, in *Modern Architecture and the Critical Present*, ed. Kenneth Frampton (London: Architectural Design, 1982), pp. 57-58.

Gandelsonas, together with his wife Diana Agrest, was more concerned with the relations between design and theory. He and Agrest came to the Italian historian especially by way of French semiology and (at this time) Althusserian political philosophy: the resemblances between Althusser's notion of philosophy as "class struggle in the realm of theory" (see *For Marx* [New York: Vintage, 1970], p. 256) and Tafuri's position that there could be no liberated architecture, only "class criticism of architecture" (*Architecture and Utopia*, p. 179), bear comparison. In the case of Vidler, also from England and a historian, Foucault was the crucial point of contact. A fourth editor, Kurt Forster, a Swiss art and architectural historian, entered the *Oppositions* board with issue 12. Although not involved with the journal during its formative period, he shared Tafuri's affinity for both Renaissance and modern studies, and later on would collaborate with him in an exhibition on Francesco di Giorgio.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Tom Killian, *Oppositions* 4 (fall 1974), p. 162.

<sup>17</sup> Of all the translations, Pellegrino d'Acerno and Robert Connolly's of *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* has been done with greatest

understanding and a poetic ear, although this book too is marred by editing and typographic errors. A not very sympathetic review of this book is Joseph Rykwert, "The Masochistic Environment," *Times Literary Supplement*, March 10-16, 1989, pp. 258-59.

<sup>18</sup> This was reworked under the title "Les bijoux indiscrets" as the introduction to the Italian edition of *Five Architects* (Roma: Officina, 1977).

<sup>19</sup> *Oppositions* 5, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> "The Ashes of Jefferson," in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, p. 297.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Tafuri's statement in *Architecture and Utopia*: "To the deceptive attempts to give architecture an ideological dress, I shall always prefer the sincerity of those who have the courage to speak of that silent and outdated 'purity'; even if this, too, still harbors an ideological inspiration, pathetic in its anachronism" (p. ix).

<sup>22</sup> Colin Rowe, Introduction, *Five*

*Architects: Eisenman, Graves, Gwathmey, Hejduk, Meier* (New York: Wittenborn, 1972), p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983).

<sup>24</sup> John Hejduk promised a spaghetti western showdown: "Tafuri's article is 'most curious'; his 'literature' I will take care of properly at a future date." *Oppositions* 7 (winter 1976), p. 97.

<sup>25</sup> Tafuri's enthusiasm for Eisenman would later diminish, and he would dismiss the latter's reading of Terragni: "The historian has to abandon his prejudices about the quality of a work to deal with the problem behind it. The work of Eisenman and Hejduk was much more interesting ten years ago than it is today because it showed a curious problem of Americans looking to Europe, and what they chose to look at was an 'Americanized' Europe — Eisenman's Terragni is an architecture without human history. Using the theoretical precepts of Chomsky and Lévi-Strauss (rather than the more characteristic American pragmatism), they succeeded in emptying their historic sources of the human subject." Manfredo Tafuri, "There Is No Criticism, Only History," *Design Book Review* 9 (spring 1986), p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> *Oppositions* 11 (winter 1977), pp. 118-23. The book was published by Editions S.A.D.G. (Paris) in 1976. Bois too complains about translation and editing errors in the French.

<sup>27</sup> Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, trans. Robert Erich Wolf (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979; Italian ed., 1976); Cacciari "review" in *Oppositions* 21 (summer 1980), pp. 106-16. For a more negative assessment of Tafuri and Dal Co's history, see William Curtis's review in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, May 1981, and, responding to it, Stanislaus von Moos's comments in reviewing Curtis's own history of modern architecture, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, summer 1983. I wish to thank Hélène Lipstadt for drawing my attention to this exchange.

<sup>28</sup> Tafuri's essay for that book is titled "The Meditations of Icarus"; it was written in 1980. See Peter Eisenman, *Houses of Cards* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), pp. 167-87. With reference to Eisenman as Icarus, cf. *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, p. 360, n. 33, where Tafuri cites Bataille's characterization of Breton as "the old mole," dirty from digging in his hole and basely corporeal, but possessed of an "Icarus complex" that makes him want to fly to an "unsullied and pristine" land "where 'the words make love' in ecstatic moments far from the physicality of the real."

<sup>29</sup> The IAUS closed before this project could be completed, and it was picked up by MIT Press.

<sup>30</sup> See, in particular, Jorge Silveti's "Beauty of Shadows" in *Oppositions* 9 (summer 1977), pp. 43-61, which takes issue with Tafuri's critique of autonomy. The presence of young Europeans like Bernard Tschumi and Rem Koolhaas at the IAUS in the mid-1970s may be noted.

<sup>31</sup> *Europa/America: Architettura urbana, alternative suburbana*, ed. Franco Raggi (Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 1978), pp. 174-82. To Van Eyck's declaration that "Humanism has hardly begun," Tafuri responded, "The path of language as communication of messages, which is the discourse of humanism, does not exist and henceforth is completely closed" (p. 179). The Americans participating in the 1976 Biennale included Raimund Abraham, Emilio Ambasz, Peter Eisenman, John Hejduk, Craig Hodgetts, Richard Meier, Charles Moore, Cesar Pelli, Robert A. M. Stern, Stanley Tigerman, and Venturi/Rauch/Scott Brown, with Eisenman coordinating the American projects.

<sup>32</sup> The term *postmodern* was also rejected by Foucault, Guattari, and Derrida; Lacan and Barthes did not live long enough to decide. It is significant, with respect to the resistance to this term, that it was considered to be American in origin. For Tafuri's attitude, see *History of Italian Architecture, 1944-1985*, chapter 14.

<sup>33</sup> As Vidler wrote in his opening editorial, "The recent exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art has been heralded as an indication that [the modernist] sensibility is changing. 'Post-modernism,' it is claimed, allows an appreciation, if not an enthusiastic espousal, of ornament, pattern, colors other than primaries, symmetry, monumental fantasy, even of the pure technique of rendering for its own sake; with the critique of functionalism, pure abstraction, and the machine utopia, realms of experience up to now forbidden by the stern purism of modernism are opened up. We are also shown evidence that a new generation of scholars is able to examine dispassionately the evidence of the previous century and to write its history for the first time without bias or second sight. The exhibition emerged in fact as the Museum of Modern's Art auto-critical act, exorcising in 1977 [sic] the Modern Movement principles it had so heartily embraced in 1932. . . . It becomes increasingly clear that to accept the ideological rupture proposed by modernism itself as the instrument of its own interpretation is to deliberately obscure the circumstances of its origins and the nature of its production. . . ." Anthony Vidler, "Academicism: Modernism," *Oppositions* 8 (spring 1977), p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Modern Architecture*, cit. note 27; Giorgio Ciucci, Francesco Dal Co, Mario Manieri Elia, and Manfredo Tafuri, *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal*, trans. Barbara Luigia La Penta



(Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979; Italian ed., 1973).

<sup>35</sup> Tafuri's initial trip to America was apparently in 1970 when, after a written correspondence with Rudolf Wittkower, the latter "summoned" him to Washington to meet him.

Tafuri found a way to come, together with Giorgio Ciucci and Mario Manieri Elia, by obtaining a collective visa to lead a group of IUAV students on a tour. Besides the New York trip in 1974 (see note 4), subsequent visits included lectures at MIT in 1976 and Harvard in 1986. Tafuri's final American engagement came in 1991, when, desperately ill, he traveled to Texas for a heart operation: it is perhaps a Benjaminian irony that the magic of the American surgeon lasted only a few years. On the encounter with Wittkower, see *La Storia come Progetto* ("History as Project"): *Manfredo Tafuri Interviewed by Luisa Passerini*, Art History Oral Documentation Project, copyright 1993, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, p. 91.

<sup>36</sup> *The American City*, p. 411.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 500: "It was not without reason that the directors of the film King Kong killed their ape on the top of The Empire State building: technological civilization conquers the irrational sentimentality of the 'noble savage.'"

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389.

<sup>39</sup> See *Architecture and Utopia*, p. 148; also *Modern Architecture*, pp. 340-41.

<sup>40</sup> "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir," *Oppositions* 3, p. 45; also *Modern Architecture*, p. 339.

<sup>41</sup> Originally published in German in 1976 as "Neu-Babylon: das New York der Zwanzigerjahre und die Suche nach dem Amerikanismus," in *archithese*, no. 20 (1976), pp. 12-24. It appeared there in a special three-part series on the metropolis (nos. 18-20) that also included other articles treating the European mythos of America. Cf. another essay by Tafuri on the American skyscraper, "La dialectique de l'absurde. Europe-USA: les avatars de l'idéologie du gratte-ciel (1918-1974)," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 178 (1975), p. 1-19.

<sup>42</sup> "The New Babylon," *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, p. 172.

<sup>43</sup> *Architecture and Utopia*, pp. 24-40.

<sup>44</sup> "The Ashes of Jefferson," *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, p. 293.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294, 301.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

<sup>47</sup> "The formal terrorism of Eisenman, the polysemia of Graves, the rigorism of Meier, the linguistic cruelty of Agrest and Gandelsonas, the constructivism of Giurgola, the ingenuous aphorisms of Robert Stern, the 'jokes' of Koolhaas, do they not actually represent broad trends that wind through the panorama of the architectural work of the last decade? The 'wall' exorcised by Hejduk in the Wall Houses is doubly symbolic: upon it is reflected the phantasm of the unquiet silence of Mies."

*Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>50</sup> I am taking these phrases out of context, although not in a larger sense. See "The Historical 'Project,'" *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, p. 12.

<sup>51</sup> For a contemporary interview with Peter Eisenman that revolves around this issue, see Alessandra Latour and Lauretta Vinciarelli, "Entretien avec Peter Eisenman," *AMC: Architecture Mouvement Continuité* 41 (March 1977), pp. 66-76.

<sup>52</sup> Significantly, with the exception of Romaldo Giurgola, the Americans in the exhibition came from the other side of the Hudson: Michael Graves, Colin Rowe, Robert Venturi.

<sup>53</sup> See the catalogue, *10 Immagini per Venezia*, ed. Francesco Dal Co (Rome: Officina, 1980).

<sup>54</sup> With a team including David Buge, John Nambu, and the present author.

<sup>55</sup> *10 Immagini per Venezia*, p. 67; in English in John Hejduk, *Mask of Medusa* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 355.

<sup>56</sup> The IAUS, overcome precisely by "impossible contradictions," would shut its doors on 40th Street in 1984; *Oppositions* stopped publishing the same year.

<sup>57</sup> "Note to the second edition", written in 1970. *Theories and History*, p. [xiv]. Obviously "conscience" should be "consciousness" — another unfortunate example of mistranslation.

<sup>58</sup> *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> See, in addition to Tafuri's comments cited in note 25, his remarks in a more recent interview (*Flash Art International*, March-April 1989): "When I talk about the work of 'The Five Architects,' I have an image of alternative circuits on the order of film clubs. And this, in any case, is perhaps the only possibility in America. What these gentlemen intuited was that they could use Europe as a reference point, as an explosive element within the interior of American culture. So these architects' elaboration of what merely amounts to so many modes of European dress was necessarily limited to a chosen few: it was a program thought out in advance for a specific elite. This reminds me of eighteenth-century 'Turkish' literature, like *L'Italiana in Algeri*... all of that taste for the exotic that was so fashionable in eighteenth-century salons" (p. 70).

<sup>60</sup> To date *Architecture and Utopia*, having sold more than 21,000 copies since 1976, has continued to outstrip all Tafuri's books in English. No doubt this is partly owing to its brevity, as well as to the drawing by Rossi, "L'architecture assassinée," reproduced on the jacket (Rossi inscribed this drawing, not unambiguously, to Tafuri). *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* has sold about 3,500 copies since publication in 1987. Besides the other books by Tafuri already cited, two more titles now exist in English: *Venice and the*

*Renaissance*, trans. Jessica Levine (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989 [Italian ed., 1985]), and *History of Italian Architecture 1944-1985*, trans. Jessica Levine (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989 [Italian eds., 1982, 1986]). A translation of Tafuri's *Ricerca del Rinascimento*, published in Italy in 1992, is due from Yale University Press in 1995.

<sup>61</sup> The members of Revisions at this time included Deborah Berke, Walter Chatham, Pe'era Goldman, Denis Hector, Christian Hubert, Michel Kagan, Beyhan Karahan, Mary McLeod, Joan Ockman, Alan Plattus, Michael Schwarting, Bernard Tschumi, and Lauretta Vinciarelli, with Alan Colquhoun as the group's *éminence grise*. Eisenman was initially instrumental in getting this group together to put on public programs for young architects at the IAUS, but it evolved into an independent study group and continued to meet in this capacity, with changes in membership, through 1988.

<sup>62</sup> See *Architecture/Criticism/Ideology*, ed. Joan Ockman et al. (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1985). In an introduction to the symposium, Mary McLeod stated, "We first became involved with this subject as an issue of investigation in 1981, a year before this symposium. The dilemma was postmodernism. At that time postmodernism generally was not viewed among architects as a broad critical or historical category, but rather as a polemical movement with stylistic and social implications... [which] appeared to relate in some fashion to the conservative turn of contemporary American politics... we felt the need to examine more seriously the relationship between culture and material conditions — in particular, the nature of architecture as ideology" (pp. 7-8).

<sup>63</sup> Besides Jameson, the symposium speakers included Demetri Porphyrios, a Greek architect practicing and teaching in England, who presented a programmatic definition of critical history in Tafurian and Althusserian terms, and Tomas Llorens, a Spanish aesthetic philosopher also working in England at the time. Llorens had previously written a neo-Kantian critique of Tafuri's position, "Manfredo Tafuri: Neo-Avant-Garde and History," included by Porphyrios in the volume *On the Methodology of Architectural History* (cit. note 14), in which he attacked Tafuri for solipsistic negativism.

<sup>64</sup> *New German Critique* 33 (fall 1984), pp. 53-65. Republished, along with "Architecture and the Critique of Ideology," in Fredric Jameson, *The Ideologies of Theory 1971-1986*, vol. 2, *Syntax of History* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1988).

<sup>65</sup> The other positions, which Jameson further distinguished by assigning them progressive and reactionary valences, were Jean-François Lyotard (promodernist, propostmodernist), Charles Jencks

and Tom Wolfe (antimodernist, propostmodernist), and Hilton Kramer and Jürgen Habermas (promodernist, antipostmodernist). It is worth noting that Tafuri himself reserved a relatively positive judgment for Lyotard's concept of the postmodern. See *History of Italian Architecture*, p. 191, and a contribution by Lyotard to *Casabella*, 517, October 1985, pp. 44-45, cited by Tafuri, "Ripetizione, complessità, anamnesi."

<sup>66</sup> For an interpretation along Jameson's lines, see, for example, Hal Foster, "(Post)Modern Polemics," *New German Critique* 33 (fall 1984) and *Perspecta* 21 (1984). Tafuri's impact within the expanding field of cultural studies is reflected in Paul Jay, "Critical Historicism and the Discipline of Architecture," in *Restructuring Architectural Theory*, ed. Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1989). A second volume produced by the Revisions group, *ArchitectuReproduction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), guest edited by Beatriz Colomina, variously addresses the issue of reproduction in architecture, with general referencing to Tafuri. I have not attempted in the present paper to address Tafuri's influence on Renaissance studies in America, which involves different context.

<sup>67</sup> For translations of the Renaissance writings, see note 60. Published in 1993 was Massimo Cacciari's *Architecture and Nihilism: On the Philosophy of Modern Architecture*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press), with an introductory essay by Patrizia Lombardo, "The Philosophy of the City," pp. ix-lviii, which sheds light on the intellectual relationship between Tafuri and Cacciari. For an exhaustive interpretation of an aspect of Tafuri's work, see Hélène Lipstadt and Harvey Mendelsohn, "Philosophy, History, and Autobiography: Manfredo Tafuri and the 'Unsurpassed' Lesson of Le Corbusier," *Assemblage* 22 (December 1993), pp. 58-103, abridged in a new version in the present publication.

<sup>68</sup> Letter dated April 29, 1985.

*I wish to thank Mary McLeod and Pierre-Alain Croset for their comments on this paper.*