HISTORIES OF
THE IMMEDIATE PRESENT
INVENTING ARCHITECTURAL MODERNISM

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INTRODUCTION

What has been the influence of contemporary architectural historians on the history of contemporary architecture?
—Reyner Banham, “The New Brutalism”

In this book I am concerned with the various ways in which architectural historians in the decades after the Second World War began to assess the legacy of the avant-gardes in order to attempt a coherent narrative of the development of modernism. In the search for a unified vision of modernity following the heterogeneous experiments of the avant-gardes in the first quarter of the twentieth century, historians played a decisive role, defining early twentieth-century programs, forms, and styles in such a way as to imply possible continuities with the present. While there have been an increasing number of studies on the historiography of modernism in recent years, opening up fields of investigation into the value of viewing history as a participant in the history it recounts, I am interested in the ways in which histories of modernism themselves were constructed as more or less overt programs for the theory and practice of design in their contemporary context. That is, whether or not the “origins” of modernism were traced to earlier moments in the Renaissance, mannerist, baroque, or revivalist periods, each genealogy, itself
based on art historical theories of style, society, space, and form, proposed a different way of looking at the present and its potential; each, that is, conceived within the dominant paradigms of abstraction, was susceptible to use by architects seeking a way to confront the social and cultural crises of the postwar period without losing sight of the principles that had inspired the early modernists.

Over the last few decades, architectural history has emerged as decidedly problematic for an architecture that, ostensibly at least, was from the beginning of the twentieth century dedicated to the suspension if not the eradication of historical references in favor of a universalized abstraction. What has been called “the return of historicism” by Nikolaus Pevsner, “postmodernism” by Charles Jencks, or “hypermodernism” by Manfredo Tafuri revealed in citations and renewed appeals to the authority of historical architecture, on the assumption that abstraction, the language of international modernism, had failed to gain popular acceptance, and was in any case essentially antihumanist.

Such a revivalism posed a problem for historians and critics. On the one hand, historians were again in demand, as much as they had been in the premodernist period, to provide authorization and depth to present practice. The idea of “type,” to give one central example—an idea that stemmed from the need to rethink the tabula rasa planning strategies of the 1950s and to respect the internal formal and social structure of cities—was traced back to its theoretical roots in the eighteenth century.

This state of affairs modified what had been the dominant question for historians in the period of the high modern movement. Where, then, history was regarded with great suspicion as a potential harbinger of stylistic revival, now history was increasingly embedded in curricula and critical discourses. This history was no longer the “history” of the 1920s with its teleological vision of modern abstraction overcoming the “styles.” It was both more
academically correct according to the standards of art historical scholarship and more broadly based in interdisciplinary studies, linking it to the interpretative strategies of structuralism and poststructuralism. In the academy, the postmodernism of intellectual debates converged with the postmodernism detected in architectural practice; theory emerged as an almost separate discipline and, together with history in its most responsible forms, became more and more detached from design. For many historians and critics, like Manfredo Tafuri, this was as it should be: what Tafuri called “operative” criticism had been, in his terms, an obstacle since the seventeenth century to the dispassionate view of architecture demanded of the truly critical historian. In this ascription, historians should avoid espousing any particular tendency in contemporary architecture. But for others, this represented a dereliction of the social and political duty of the critic to engage the present with the full weight of past experience.

While more recently the acerbic debates between so-called modernists and postmodernists have softened a little, in favor of a generalized “late modern” position that joins technological expression to iconographic form, the question for history, and thereby for historians, remains. What, in short, does the architectural historian do, not qua historian, but for architects and architecture? Or, to put it more theoretically, What kind of work does or should architectural history perform for architecture, and especially for contemporary architecture? This of course is a version of the commonplace refrain, How is history ”related” to design? Is it useful? And if so, in what ways?

This question is a relatively new one; for much of architectural history, history was not a problem for architecture—or rather, instead of being a ”problem” per se, the questions surrounding history were a solution for the discipline. From the Renaissance to the mid-nineteenth century, that is, from the moment when medieval tradition was gradually but self-consciously replaced by
the historical revival of antiquity, history supplied the very stuff of architecture. To that end, more or less without exception, the historian was the architect: from Alberti to Schinkel, it was the architect’s responsibility to write the history that would authorize both precedent and innovation. Schinkel’s unfinished lifework, *Das architektonische Lehrbuch*, was possibly the last in this long line of quasi-historical justifications of design. The emergence of the professional architectural historian, from James Fergusson, Jacob Burckhardt, Heinrich Wölfflin, Wilhelm Worringer, August Schmarsow, to Paul Frankl, marked the development of scholarly academic art history out of the scholarly revision of architectural history—until the sense of the “modern,” allied with an emerging sense of “abstraction” and “form” guided by new structural imperatives, gave architects the sense of a break so complete with the “historical styles” that history itself became suspect.

Of course, history did not go away for modernism: rather, it became all the more essential on at least three levels—first, to demonstrate the fundamental antiquity of the old way of building; then, to tell the story of the prehistory of modernism as it emerged out of the old; and finally, with the help of abstract ideas of form and space, to be redrawn as a continuing process of invention and a repertory of formal and spatial moves.

To an extent, this condition held firm through the 1940s and 1950s, especially in academia, where historians like Bruno Zevi and Reyner Banham were appointed to chairs in architectural history in architecture schools. But it was also during this immediate post–World War II period that questions began to be asked about the continuing usefulness of history, traditional or modernist. For during these years the largely unselfconscious energies that had fueled the first- and second-generation modernists were themselves gradually subjected to the inevitable process of historicization. Indeed, as Fredric Jameson has pointed out,
“modernism” itself as a concept and ideology—modernism as we tend to know it today—was largely a product of those postwar years, as critics and historians such as Clement Greenberg were building a coherent and systematized version of ”modernism” founded on their interpretation of art from Manet to Pollock.1

In the same way, in architecture, around the mid 1950s the status of history was thrown into doubt and its uses rendered questionable by the very history of the modern movement that had been written by its historians—Pevsner, Hitchcock and Johnson, and Giedion, to name just a few. Once relegated to the status of ”history,” modern architecture itself was susceptible to academicization, even to revival. And it was the revival of modern architecture as style in the 1950s and 1960s—what later critics were to see as the first instances of a ”postmodernism”—that so disturbed the historians and critics who, like Sigfried Giedion and Nikolaus Pevsner in the 1930s and 1940s, had tried to write the history of modernism in a partisan, if not propagandistic, mode.

It is this moment that I want to examine, and through the lens of four of its most trenchant critics. For, in the debates about the effects of history on practice that enlivened the architectural scene in Europe and the United States in those decades, we can, I think, begin to set the groundwork for our own thinking about history, its uses and abuses, as Nietzsche once put it. Banham was one of the first to ask the question: ”What has been the infl uence of contemporary architectural historians on the history of contemporary architecture?” He answered it himself, noting, ”They have created the idea of a Modern Movement. . . . And beyond that they have offered a rough classification of the ’isms’ which are the thumb-print of Modernity.”2

The first scholarly examinations of modern architecture began to appear in the late 1920s. Adolf Behne’s Der moderne Zweckbau (1926), Adolf Platz’s Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit (1927),
Sigfried Giedion’s *Bauen in Frankreich* (1928), and Bruno Taut’s *Modern Architecture* (1929), among many other collections, began the process of assembling the evidence and developing the criteria for “modernity,” based on which Henry-Russell Hitchcock’s *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration* (1929), Walter Curt Behrendt’s *Modern Building* (1937), Nikolaus Pevsner’s *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* (1936), and Giedion’s *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (1941) were able to construct more or less coherent narratives of origin and development. Although almost all shared a common aversion to the word “history” as inimical to modern ideals, nevertheless, as Panayotis Tournikiotis has shown, these narratives shared a common concept of history as a determining, unfolding force, capable of articulating questions of the past, present, and future of architecture, as well as a belief in some form of sociocultural zeitgeist that, if correctly identified, equally determines the respective “modernity” or nonmodernity of the work. History might lead architecture to modernity, but once there it was to be cast off, like the “styles” vilified by Le Corbusier in *Vers une architecture*.

They were also extremely partial narratives, developing their genealogies from moments in the past that seemed to them starting points that would justify the specific contemporary practices they supported or admired. Thus Hitchcock, in *Romanticism and Reintegration*, sought the roots of his beloved “New Tradition” in the late eighteenth century, and was uneasy as well as excited by the work of the “New Pioneers,” whom he saw as at once going beyond and disturbing the rationalism of Frank Lloyd Wright, Otto Wagner, Peter Behrens, and Auguste Perret. Pevsner, in *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, focused on the relations between Britain and Germany, seeing the origins of Gropius’s rational-functionalism in the Arts and Crafts movement and conveniently ignoring the French contribution, while Giedion failed to include
more than a mention of Mies van der Rohe in his *Space, Time and Architecture*, preferring instead to leap from the baroque movement to that encapsulated in Le Corbusier’s villas of the 1920s.

But whatever their partialities, these pioneer works accomplished what the modernist architects themselves feared the most: the historicizing of modernism. Indeed, by 1940 modern architecture had become fully assimilated into the art historical canon and given its place in the history of the ”styles.” Where once Le Corbusier had declared the end of ”The Styles” and Mies van der Rohe had rejected academic art history in favor of ”building-art,” now Hitchcock was rewriting the entire style history of architecture to define what he called an ”International Style modeled on the spread of Gothic in the 12th century”; Pevsner was drawing a temporal line around something identifiable called the ”Modern Movement”; and Giedion was articulating the relations and historical developments that tied together a modern vision and former styles.

Whether modern architecture was seen to begin with the baroque, classicism, neoclassicism, nineteenth-century eclecticism, or Arts and Crafts revivalism, the floodgates were now opened for a host of competing narratives, a variety of historically based modernisms, and several versions of a possible ”unity” of style characterizing the ”modern.” Further, such a widening of historical reference and roots meant that the history of modern architecture was as dependent on the historians of other ages as it was on its own specialists: as modernity was defined, so its precedents were isolated—and vice versa, allowing historians of the Renaissance, the baroque, as well as those of the newly defined mannerist and neoclassical periods to refer to contemporary tendencies, if not define their own ”styles” as a conscious or unconscious response to contemporary tendencies.

For what united all these historical assays of modernity with all other historical work in architecture was their common basis
in a method that had emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century, a method that relied not so much on the identification of “stylistic” motifs as on the comparison of forms—masses, volumes, surfaces—in the abstract. Beginning with Alois Riegl’s formal interpretation of ornament and his conceptual history of spatial vision, continuing with Heinrich Wölfflin’s psychological analysis of form and studies of the Renaissance and baroque periods, and culminating in the spatial construction of history by August Schmarsow, the architecture of all periods was seen as a series of typical formal–spatial combinations, each tied to specific epochal “wills” or “drives,” and each comparable to the next in a natural history of morphological transformation. What the clues offered by the shapes of ears or drapery movements were to art historians like Bernard Berenson and Aby Warburg, so spatial form was to architectural historians.

Such a history, defining itself as more a history of space than a history of style, was not only commensurate with modernism’s own aspirations but began to define an approach particular to an architectural history as it developed its disciplinary identity out of art history in general. Where, for Burckhardt and Wölfflin, architectural history formed an integral part of art history, if not a foundational and constructive object of its study, with the emergence of spatial analysis the three-dimensional characteristics of architecture began to set it apart, first from the visual and two-dimensional forms of painting, then from the equally visual but also empathetically haptic reception of sculpture as investigated by Adolf von Hildebrand. Thus, Paul Frankl, in his 1914 study of the phases of development of modern building, set out to articulate a specific analytical method for architecture based on the identification of spatial form as it was inflected by structure, movement, and use. His categories of spatial form (Raumform), corporeal form (Körperform), visible form (Bildform), and purposive intention (Zweckgesinnung) were then calibrated with each
other in a chronology according to four phases of “development”: Renaissance, baroque, rococo, and neoclassicism.

Perhaps most important to our argument, however, is Frankl’s innovative attempt to develop diagrams of spatial organization. Whereas art historians had often described “virtual” diagrams of the temporal development of history, architectural historians like James Fergusson and César Daly had depicted temporal progress in diagram form, and historians of structure from Viollet-le-Duc to Auguste Choisy had adopted the axonometric projection to present plan, section, and volumetric form simultaneously, no historian until Frankl had conceived of a comparative taxonomy of diagrammed spaces, with their separate units, the rhythm of their bay structure, their interconnections, and potential movements between them joined in a single, simplified summary of the building.

This taxonomy differed from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century comparative presentations of type as in Julien-David Le Roy’s comparative plans of religious buildings or Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand’s more complete historical “parallel,” in that the notions of distribution and character that informed these earlier comparisons were directly related to plan form and effect. Frankl, by contrast, was working with an idea of spatial dynamics drawn from the psychology of Robert Vischer, the baroque spatial studies of August Schmarsow, the psychological interpretations of Wölfflin, and later from the findings of gestalt psychologists. For Frankl, space has its own distinct relationships to movement, and the relations among spatial units have their rhythms and flows. Diagramming such relations would establish the essential formal characteristics of the object in its place in history and, through comparative analysis, trace the shifts between one phase of architectural development and the next. Through Frankl, architectural history gained its special form of representation, one that sought a diagram in each temporal moment and that was easily taken up
by architects themselves as they attempted to incorporate history into their own more abstract designs.\textsuperscript{10}

In this process, which might be called the "diagramming" of history, it is possible to trace the reciprocal influence of abstraction as it emerges as a force in art and architecture and the exploration of more "scientific" methods in art history. Where modern architecture desires to shake off the stylistic eclecticism of the nineteenth century, modern art history obliges with a counterstylistic mode of analysis that emphasizes perception, experience, and psychological effect on the one hand, and basic formal attributes on the other. In this sense, Frankl’s \textit{Die Entwicklungphasen der neueren Baukunst} (1914) appears as the architectural counterpart to Wölfflin’s \textit{Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe} (1915)—a relationship stressed by the title given to the later translation of Frankl’s book: \textit{Principles of Architectural History}.\textsuperscript{11}

Given the preoccupation of the early generation of architectural historians with the Renaissance, it was no accident that the first histories of modernism were written by historians who had followed Riegl and Wölfflin in exploring the new territory of the baroque and its seeming extension into the modern period. Wölfflin had already shown his distaste for the baroque, seeing it as the first indication of the spatial dissemination characteristic of the modern period: "One can hardly fail to recognize the affinity that our own age in particular bears to the Italian Baroque. \textit{A Richard Wagner appeals to the same emotions.}"\textsuperscript{12} Refusing Wölfflin’s rejection of the baroque as "formless art," Giedion in his thesis \textit{Spätbarocker und romantischer Klassizismus} (1922)—a work that relied methodologically on Riegl’s \textit{Spätrömische Kunstindustrie} (1901) even as it supplied the burden of Hitchcock’s \textit{Romanticism and Reintegration}—began to fill the void left by Wölfflin between the baroque and the modern. Pevsner’s first book, a detailed history of Leipzig baroque published in 1928 and based on his dissertation of 1924 (written at the University of Leipzig
under Wilhelm Pinder), was explicitly indebted to Schmarsow’s studies of baroque and rococo architecture. His later studies in mannerism and the picturesque were directly tied to his belief that these styles prefigured modernism. Emil Kaufmann, student of Riegl and Dvořák, formed his conception of a “revolution” in architecture around 1800 out of his conviction that the generation of Ledoux and Boullée anticipated the modernism of Loos, Le Corbusier, and Neutra.

The enforced emigration of German and Austrian scholars in the 1930s brought these discussions to the attention of British and American audiences, giving a sense of historical legitimacy to a modern movement hitherto largely confined to the Continent. Emil Kaufmann, briefly in England and then taking up residence in the United States in 1940; Nikolaus Pevsner in England from 1933; Rudolf Wittkower moving to London in 1934 to join the Warburg Institute newly reestablished from Hamburg: these scholars and more, quickly integrated into the Anglo-Saxon intellectual culture of their hosts, were to provide the stimulus for a complete reevaluation of modernist history after 1945, as they gained an English-language readership hitherto denied them. Emil Kaufmann, hosted by Philip Johnson and the newly created Society of Architectural Historians in Boston, began ten years of research and publication on neoclassicism, its roots, and resonance to the present; Nikolaus Pevsner shifted his zeitgeist approach to national culture from Germany to England, and became a powerful force in contemporary architectural culture with his editorship of the Architectural Review after 1941; and Rudolf Wittkower, publishing his Palladian studies in the Journal of the Warburg Institute from 1946, began to attract the interest of a younger group of architects interested in reformulating the principles of a modernism distinct in its social and formal approach from prewar CIAM-dominated theory and practice.
The unsung progenitor of this reevaluation of modern history was Emil Kaufmann. By linking the pseudo-abstract designs of Ledoux and Boullée to the principles of the Enlightenment in his 1933 book *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier*, Kaufmann gave a depth to the idea of modernism that appealed to those wishing to sustain the inheritance of Le Corbusier, but needing to plumb new sources of rationalism in the face of its apparent betrayal in the postwar work at Ronchamp. Kaufmann’s influence initially touched Philip Johnson in the early 1940s, endowing Johnson’s own traduction of Mies with neoclassical overtones; later, with the posthumous (1954) publication of *Architecture in the Age of Reason*, Kaufmann won an audience in Britain and Italy, specifically with Colin Rowe and Aldo Rossi. Rowe himself was especially open to Kaufmann’s thesis, having in 1947 followed his teacher Wittkower in pushing back the origins of modernism even further, to the mannerist period, stressing the continuity of tradition in mathematical order and mannerist composition. Rowe’s influence on contemporaries, from Alan Colquhoun to James Stirling, was profound. At the same time, Reyner Banham, in an attempt to outdo his own teacher Pevsner, offered the first scholarly assessment of modern architecture in a kind of continuation of Pevsner’s *Pioneers*, treating what he called the “zone of silence” between 1914 and 1939. It is paradoxical, in retrospect, that Rowe’s modernized neo-Palladianism, at first taken up with enthusiasm by the “new brutalists,” was to emerge as a foundation for Banham’s own countermodern idea of the new brutalism, a stance later rejected in favor of his conclusion that the modern movement had failed in its technological aspirations.

The histories of modernism thus developed certainly rested on methodological, and often archival, bases that, from increased distance and primary research, were wider and deeper than those of their predecessors. However, their not-so-hidden agendas were, in different ways, still pointed toward contem-
porary practice. Kaufmann’s Enlightenment was a clear moral fable for a renewed modern movement at a moment of serious social reaction in Germany and Austria; Rowe’s modern mannerism opened the door to a variety of formal and semiotic experiments that gradually shifted the argument from new modern to postmodern; Banham’s technological optimism and his call for “une architecture autre” supported brutalists, metabolists, and neofuturists. In this sense, the students of the first generation of modernist historians were as engaged in proselytizing as their teachers: from Pevsner and Giedion to Rowe and Banham, the objects of enthusiasm may have changed but not the message. History was at once source, verification, and authorization.

Among the first to criticize this “instrumental” use of history was Manfredo Tafuri, who, trained as an architect and planner, had begun his career as a historian by assessing the present state of modern historiography. Published in 1968, his essay *Teorie e storia dell’architettura* identified the profound “antihistoricism” of the modernist avant-gardes, and attempted to distinguish between the realms of criticism, theory, and history in such a way as to protect history from its complicity with practice. His criticism was precisely aimed to those historians—Giedion, Zevi, Banham—who had seen history as instrumental in giving meaning to architecture, who had “read in late antique architecture the premises of Kahn or Wright, in mannerism those of expressionism or of the present moment, in prehistorical remains the premises of organicism or of a few ‘nonformal’ experiments.”

Here, in his rigorous refusal of those who posed as the “Vestals” of the modern movement and his insistence on the historicization of the very instruments of criticism themselves, Tafuri attempted a demythologization of history, as complete as that assumed by his intellectual mentor Max Weber early in the twentieth century. And yet his ceaseless search for methods of analysis drawn from structuralism, psychoanalysis, semiology, and poststructuralism.
created a "theory effect" that proved for architects as powerful a lure as historical reference, one apparently shielded from the pitfalls of eclecticism by "scientific" authority.

In the following chapters, I examine the historical approaches of these four modernist historians and critics: Emil Kaufmann, Colin Rowe, Reyner Banham, and Manfredo Tafuri. Each is seen in the context of his intellectual formation, the specific nature of the "modernism" advanced by his historical narrative, and the influence of these models on practice. Rather than attempt a comprehensive review of the life and work of each historian, I have preferred to concentrate on a specific moment or group of writings that brings these issues sharply into focus and particularly on the period between 1945 and 1975, a period of especial intensity in the debates over the role of history in architectural practice and education. Each of these different histories imagined modernism in a form deeply complicit with the "origin" it proposed. Thus, the modernism conceived by Kaufmann was, like the late Enlightenment projects he selected, one of pure, geometrical forms and elemental composition; that of Rowe saw mannerist ambiguity and complexity in both spatial and surface conformations; that of Banham took its cue from the technological aspirations of the futurists, but with the added demand of successful realization; that of Tafuri found its source in the apparently fatal division between technical experiment and cultural nostalgia represented respectively by Brunelleschi and Alberti. Inevitably, each spawned its own version of the contemporary "modern," and each supported, often unwittingly, a selective list of approved architects.

In conclusion, I ask the more general question of whether the continued reliance on history by architects in the second half of the twentieth century should be seen as the apparently new phase commonly called "postmodernism"—or whether modernism as a whole, and from the outset, harbored its own spatio-entropic
critique in what has become known since the 1860s as posthis-
toire thought, a sense of stasis and ending that matched the neo-
finalism of post-Darwinist biology.

In this investigation, then, I hope to demonstrate not the
pernicious effect of history on design, nor the need radically to
separate the two, but rather their inevitable collusion, one that
pervades all modern architectural discourse, a collusion that has
given rise to some of the more interesting architectural experi-
ments of the postwar period, including Johnson’s Glass House,
Stirling’s Staatsgalerie, Archigram’s Living City, Rossi’s Città
Analogia, and, more recently, Koolhaas’s Kunsthalle and Eisen-
man’s Houses I–XI, to take only a very few examples.
For Brunelleschi, Tafuri argues, the invention of a new symbolic system and its investment in autonomous objects laid open the medieval town as a site for intervention, architectural structures inserted as critical ruptures with the past and shifters of significance for the present. By contrast, Tafuri casts Alberti as a "restorer" seeking to reinvent the code of antique unity, who nevertheless compromises with the preexisting system. In this way Tafuri characterizes the double allegiance of the Renaissance as caught between two potentially opposed strategies that will resonate throughout the next three centuries:

On the one hand, the will to establish historically an anti-historical code, like the one of the revived classicism; on the other, the temptation—repressed, but continuously cropping up—to compromise and dirty one’s hands with the very medieval and Gothic languages disempowered by the entire of classicism, in its apodictic declarations, inasmuch as they were guilty of betraying the givens of the true and beautiful of the Antique, elected to a second and truer Nature.42

The "ghost of the Middle Ages," whether posturing as repressed history or possible revival, haunts the experimentalism of mannerism and the "bricolage" of Borromini, to the point that Tafuri can see the eclecticism of the late baroque, and the intrusion of the non- and anticlassical into the classical, as "a prophetic anticipation of the attitudes typical of the twentieth-century avant-gardes: the collage of memories extrapolated from their historical contexts [that] finds structure and a semantic location within the frame of an organic space autonomously constructed."43 Hence the importance of Perrault, and even more of Wren, as Tafuri sought a "natural" geometric unifier for the eclecticism of his historico-political languages.
In this analysis, paradoxically enough, it is the Enlightenment, site of Kaufmann’s abstract modernism, that prepared architecture for the dominance of historicism. Once separated from any remaining vestige of an “organic” classicism, and supported by the archaeological recovery of a “real” history, architecture is now open to the play of historical revival as having an absolute value in itself, calibrated according to the demands of a new civic order. Marx’s celebrated analysis of the role of history in revolution is enacted here in architectural terms: the history that “weighs like an alp upon the brain of the living” now “glorified new struggles,” enacting “a new historic scene in such time-honored disguise and with such borrowed language.”

Tafuri separates architecture from history and offers two solutions: the one exemplified by the “eclecticism” of Piranesi; the other by the antisymbolism of a Durand. In both, the unity of the “classical” object is broken, either through a rejection of symbolism in favor of a desperate clinging to the signs of a lost past, or through the deliberate ignoring of history altogether in favor of a combinatorial, compositional logic based on geometry. In this way, finally, Tafuri joins the “eclipse of the object” to Hegel’s declaration of the “death of art,” and thence to the “crisis of historicity” manifested by modernism, as in the work of Mondrian, van Doesburg, Dada, and Sant’Elia.

Tafuri’s semantic analysis of the contradictions inherent in historical revival since the Renaissance, setting the roots of modernist antihistoricism in the first attempts to authorize the “invention” of a new antiquity, thus formed the foundation of his research into the Renaissance, allowing him the freedom to investigate its crises and continuities as if it were an integral and, more importantly, foundational moment in the history of the avant-gardes. Against the (then) contemporary preoccupation with the post-Giedion understanding of architecture as space, Tafuri took note of the various structuralisms, from semiotics
to information science, that were proposing a more "scientific" observation of the architectural object. Opposing a history that, in its very narrative forms, supported a supposedly organic idea of progress and sustained "modernity" in architecture in a seamless conjunction with the ideology of capitalist development as a whole, Tafuri saw in semiology, at least, a means of cutting through the ceaseless flow of criticism in the service of architecture and of producing the outlines of an "operative" criticism that would reendow history with an objective and materialist basis. And while he was to react equally strongly against the subsequent mythologies of "architecture as language," the terms of semiological critique were present in his work to the end. Indeed, in Teorie e storia the issue of language, applied to the theorization and interpretation of architecture itself, emerges as a leitmotif of Tafuri’s analysis as a "scientific" counter to either the neo-Kantian formalist tradition that culminated in Wölfflin, or the neo-Hegelian tradition that culminated in Riegl.

Tafuri found support on this point in Sergio Bettini’s analysis of architectural history as semantic criticism. Bettini, in an article published in 1958 in the second volume of Zodiac, titled "Semantic Criticism and the Historical Continuity of European Architecture," had written: "Whoever exercises the practice of criticism of art or architecture sooner or later recognizes the opportunity for an attentive semantic control of the language adopted: that is to say, of the instrument which serves them to practice their own criticism." Tafuri cites this article in Teorie e storia to confirm his belief that architecture might in fact be a language, subject to its laws and its critical examination: "Art is not representation but it is, itself, the formal structure of history. This is true even if we assume art is a language: we can then say that the language of art is the morphology of culture." He also cites Bettini’s introduction to the prescient 1953 Italian translation of Alois Riegl’s Spätromische Kunstindustrie (Late Roman art industry), in which
Bettini suggests that the “language” of architecture is not simply a symbolic or iconographic system in the terms of Panofsky, but rather a language in its own right; and more importantly, is, as far as history was concerned, the language:

In Bettini’s fundamental introduction to the Italian translation (1953) of Riegl’s Spätrömische Kunstindustrie, the structuralist tone takes on the aspect of a precisely calibrated critical method. Bettini (and not only in this essay) demonstrates his assimilation—almost alone in the Italian cultural scene of this time—of the contributions of the Anglo-Saxon semantic schools, from Tarski to Carnap, and to the Meaning of Meaning by Ogden and Richards, but has explicitly recognized the linguistic character of artistic production, linking the problem of criticism to what he terms the “paradox of metalanguage.”

That language is the internal explication of architecture, and that this language is in turn “history” as construed by society, might well be seen as the intellectual premise of Tafuri’s formal analysis of architecture for the rest of his career.

But Teorie e storia—the combined result of having punctured the balloon of “history in the service of architecture” and the mediated assessments of the ruling “scientific” methodologies—while preparing the ground for Tafuri’s preferred “instrumental criticism,” does not necessarily provide a clear picture of what a nonoperative history might be, in either narrative or subjective terms. Indeed, the obvious influence of structuralist and poststructuralist theories on history seems, for Tafuri, to lead to a kind of stasis where the rejection of the overarching narrative leaves no narrative in its place. Caught, like Nietzsche, in the endless relays between “monumental,” “antiquarian,” and
"critical" history, Tafuri embraces the third, but at the same time inherits its dangers—as Nietzsche put it, while bringing the past "before the tribunal [of history], scrupulously examining it and finally condemning it," unmitigated critique "takes the knife to its roots." The gradual resolution of this tension, or rather its empirical and conceptual testing over many years and in different contexts at diverse scales, is the subsequent history of Tafuri’s own practice.

**Ideology and Utopia**

Just as it is not possible to establish a Political Economy based on class, but only a class critique of Political Economy, so it is not given to "anticipate" a class architecture (an architecture "for a liberated society") but only possible to introduce a class critique of architecture. *Nothing beyond this from the—sectarian and partial—point of view of a rigorous Marxism.*

—Manfredo Tafuri, *Teorie e storia*

In the late 1960s and 1970s in Italy and from the 1980s in the United States, it became commonplace to believe that Tafuri was a Marxist, and to see his contributions to history as a model of a rigorous "Marxist" historiography, albeit of the special kind understood as Marxist in post-1968 Italy. This view of Tafuri emerged most strongly after the publication of his seminal essay "Per una critica dell’ideologia architettonica" in 1969, and was reinforced in his preface to the second edition of *Teorie e storia* a year later. Through his implied reference to Marx’s *Critique of Political Economy* and *German Ideology* in the essay’s title, Tafuri evidently wished to reinforce his claims for a “scientific” and therefore critical history as against the operative criticism
that tended to support architectural production, and further to encourage the idea of a critical, or even revolutionary, architecture. As he remarks, "Any attempt to overthrow the institution [of architecture], the discipline, leading us into the most heightened negations or the most paradoxical ironies—as the case of Dada and surrealism teaches us—is destined to see itself overturned into a positive contribution, into a 'constructive' avant-garde, into an ideology all the more positive because all the more dramatically critical and self-critical."50 But in this passage we can understand architecture not simply as a case of the design of buildings or the planning of towns, but rather as an institution. And as an institution, as a "discipline," subject to all the regulations of bourgeois society and the capitalist state, "architecture" is a fundamentally modern phenomenon, one born with, and in support of, all the advanced institutions of developed capitalist societies. In this sense, "architecture"—the totality of structures, systems, ideas, practices that are bound up with buildings designed and built by architects—is an ideology. It takes its place beside law, religion, and the rest as the mystification of material practice. In this assertion, as he wrote in the preface to the English translation of Progetto e utopia in 1976, Tafuri thought he would have avoided subsequent claims that he had produced "an apocalyptic prophecy, 'the expression of renunciation,'" leading to "the ultimate pronouncement of the 'death of architecture.'"51 In his mind, from the Marxist position of the journal Contropiano, all this was evident. But his readers in architecture, separating his essay from this context, simply found him to be "against" architecture purely and simply.

Tafuri also made it clear that as a work of ideological criticism, "Per una critica dell’ideologia architettonica” had to be placed within the wider context of political theory in Marxist thought from 1960 to 1969: the studies of Fortini (Verifica dei poteri), Tronti, and above all of his friends Alberto Asor Rosa and Mas-
Manfredo Tafuri. From the standpoint of 1969, then, Tafuri was pro-
claiming not a death of architecture but a conscious recognition
of “architecture’s” role as an ideology, and with this a recognition
of the fading of this role, its developing uselessness for capitalist
development. What interested him was not any revolutionary role
for a new or radical architecture, but “the precise identification of
those tasks which capitalist development [had] taken away from
architecture.” The drama of contemporary architecture, rather
than being located in its search for a new ideological, reformist,
utopian, or developmental role, lay in its “sublime uselessness,”
leading to its recourse in “form without utopia.” For this use-
lessness Tafuri had no nostalgia or regret (“because when the role of
a discipline ceases to exist, to try and stop the course of things is
only regressive utopia, and of the worst kind”), nor was he mak-
ing a prophecy (“because the process is actually taking place daily
before our very eyes”). And neither capitalism nor any existing
postrevolutionary society had yet found a replacement—an “in-
stitutionally defined role for the technicians charged with build-
ing activity.”

What Tafuri is calling “architectural ideology” is that definition
of architecture, current since at least the late eighteenth century,
as something above and beyond mere building. The philosopher
d’Alembert had said it in his introduction to the Encyclopédie:
“Architecture in the eyes of a philosopher is but the embellished
mask of one of man’s greatest needs.” That is, in the eyes of a
philosopher dedicated to the eradication of masks and embe-
llishment in favor of naked truth, architecture is a rhetorical cover
for what later architects were to call function. Ruskin repeated
this definition in a more idealist sense when he distinguished
between building as shelter and a work of architecture that raised
the soul; or Pevsner in his notorious “Lincoln cathedral is a work
of architecture; a bicycle shed is a building.” Hence the “ideol-
ogy” of architecture is precisely what distinguishes itself from its
own material practice. In this sense, Tafuri logically calls for a scientific analysis of building practices as a preliminary for establishing what might emerge as a role for the "technicians of building activity" after the revolution. The role of the historian is then to trace the complicated evolution of architecture as an ideology from the Renaissance on, in Tafuri’s time frame, and to demonstrate all the contradictions embodied and exploded along the way. And first in line were the contradictions of so-called radical or avant-garde experiments to invent “other” architectures, which had turned so quickly into regressive utopias or new forms of ideology.

Anxiety

To dispel anxiety by understanding and internalizing its causes: this would seem to be one of the principal ethical imperatives of bourgeois art.
—Manfredo Tafuri, “Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology”

The words “anxiety” and “anguish” recur throughout Tafuri’s writing. “To dispel anxiety by understanding and internalizing its causes.” ran the opening lines of Progetto e utopia as of the essay “Per una critica dell’ideologia architettonica”: “this would seem to be one of the principal ethical imperatives of bourgeois art” (Allontare l’angoscia comprendendone e introiettandone le cause: questo sembra essere uno dei principali imperativi etivi dell’arte borghese). Later in the same essay, Tafuri, as if citing himself in quotation marks, will use the same phrase—“dispelling anxiety by internalizing its causes”—with reference to Le Corbusier’s Obus project for Algiers. The same preoccupation reappears in mature form in the foreword to Ricerca del Rinascimento: “The theoretical anxi-
eties [ansie] of the nineteenth century already expressed a sort of anguish [angoscia] when confronted by an architecture that was becoming increasingly self-referential.” Tafuri asks: “If the origins of the aforementioned ‘anguish’ [agonia] are to be located in the humanist affirmation of the subject, how can one hope for a recovery based on subjective volition?”

What is being registered in these quasi-nostalgic terms—anguish and decline—is, according to Tafuri, no less than the crumbling of the a priori foundations of referentiality seen to have been established so firmly in Renaissance and baroque art—the era of the “triumph of linear perspective” and “naturalism.” In his argument, the “anguish” already being exhibited during the nineteenth century was seen by the twentieth-century avant-gardes as a form of liberation, even as their opponents were casting the notion of “loss” and “decline” in terms that, as Tafuri remarks, seemed to register the “aesthetic equivalent of a homicide or a mass catastrophe.” Yet, considered from the point of view of a historian rather than that of a nostalgic memory artist, such terms would seem to “exhibit a surfeit of meaning.” Instead, Tafuri suggests that one replace the term “anguish” with the more neutral term “accomplishment”: thus the “accomplishment” of the “referent”—the very triumph of the so-called Renaissance would also be accompanied by its successive displacement. Modernism, then, would be a displacement of referentiality, rather than a loss.

In this way, Tafuri counters the “foundationalist nostalgia” common to modernists—who would celebrate this “loss”—and their opponents. The commonplaces of postmodernism—such as the “compulsion to quote” that results in the fragmentation of language—are seen to be only part of a more general reflection on the “eclipse” of totality and plenitude that was the object also of high modernism: and thus Le Corbusier’s and Mies van der Rohe’s “interrogations of the very principles of European
rationality” join James Stirling’s “ironies” as symptoms of the same “displacement” of the referent.  

Against this “horizon,” Tafuri situates his researches on the Renaissance: “Formulated in the space where the present finds its problems, they attempt a dialogue with the ‘era of representation.’” 

But, in distinction to former historians of the Renaissance from Wölfflin to Wittkower, themselves largely taken up with the myth of ”decline” and ”eclipse,” of ”anguish” and ”loss,” Tafuri offers no preconceived version of this ”representation” nor of the ”Renaissance” that previously characterized this period. What he does offer is a series of investigations of considerable narrative complexity into the debates that swirled around referentiality at the moment when they were not yet conscious of being debates in a postconceived ”humanism” or ”perspectivity.” Their politics and aesthetics are presented, so to speak, in the raw; their shifts and turns of individual and group position analyzed in terms that at once join them to economic, opportunistic, and intellectual power struggles. History in this sense, and compared to the grand universal historicisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is seen as a ”weak power” that, rather than resolving the problems of the past in a momentarily satisfying solution, leaves them ”living and unresolved, unsettling our present.”

This is the question Tafuri addresses in the foreword to the Ricerca, where the question of ”perspectivity” becomes activated not simply as an analogue to the historian’s method, but in terms of its own history: precisely, the relations between perspective theory and practice and the question of referentiality. Tafuri’s meditation on perspective is set in a dense, two-page summary of the ”project” that had marked his entire career, which he attempts to bind to the contents of the Ricerca. On the surface, it is at once a diagnosis of contemporary and modern architectural culture and a hypothesis for its historical reformulation. For Tafuri, in 1992 as in 1968, the problem is signaled by a ”culture
of architecture reflecting on itself," an internalized discourse of meaning that continuously identifies a "crisis" but fails to comprehend the way in which the nature of this so-called crisis is linked to culture as a whole, and equally refuses to acknowledge the unoriginality of its call to arms. But where in 1968 this crisis was characterized under the semiotic sign of "meaning," in 1992 the question is raised in the context of the postmodern (what Tafuri calls the "hypermodern"). Tafuri argues that "the current theoretical habitus does not differ considerably from others that have determined twentieth-century aesthetic choices; in fact, it reproduces the familiar compulsion to overturn the dominant order"—replicating the sense of crisis felt by the historical avant-gardes as a function of a break from history itself, accompanied by a critical awareness of an "anguish of the referent," or, in Walter Benjamin's terms, the "decline of the aura."

Certainly in the Ricerca Tafuri seems to "accomplish" what he had set out as the historical project in Teorie e storia—to counter the avant-garde "myth is against history" (as Barthes put it) with history against myth, to "rescue historicity from the web of the past," where modernism "from the very beginning, in the European avant-garde movements [presented itself] as a true challenge to history." Uniting Dada and de Stijl, Kahn and Rietveld, under this antihistorical umbrella—all movements that attempted to substitute the "myth of Order" for historicism—Tafuri acted to reinstate history, to resist the "eclipse" of history that had been the dream of modernism. In this way the studies in Venezia e il Rinascimento (1985) and Ricerca del Rinascimento work toward a redefinition of architectural history on multiple levels: interdisciplinary and interinstitutional, they study "the nodes where events, times, and mentalities intersect," calibrating the ways in which "political decisions, religious anxieties, the arts and sciences, and the res aedificatoria become irrevocably interwoven."
Disenchantments

Total disenchantment produces great historians. And Manfredo Tafuri was a great historian of this kind.
—Alberto Asor Rosa, “Critique of Ideology and Historical Practice”

Despite Tafuri’s apparent accomplishment of his historical project, embedded in his examination of the notion of “loss” and consequent “anguish” is a sense that the historian too is implicated; that the “loss” spoken of with such rhetorical surfeit also haunts him in such a way as to raise difficult questions of interpretation and historical distance. While in his early works, such as Progetto e utopia, Tafuri makes it clear that the “loss” or “disenchantment” he speaks of is one construed by bourgeois ideology, and stems from what social scientists like Max Weber understood as the Wertfreiheit or value-free liberal ideal, in the foreword to Ricerca his historical perspective has shifted somewhat. In 1968, to take one example, Tafuri claimed Walter Benjamin, in his recognition of Baudelaire’s experience of the city as “shock,” to be a companion in the struggle to de

ne the historical parameters of modernity and the modernism that was its representation. In 1992, however, Tafuri groups Benjamin with other nostalgic bourgeois theorists of loss, including some who seem ideologically opposed. Thus in his discussion of the myths that have surrounded modernity and its “decline,” Tafuri states: “Fortunately for us, the reception of specific moments in the history of modern criticism permits a ‘bracketing off’ of the ideological sign originally stamped on them. For example, it is difficult indeed not to sense the close affinity between Sedlmayr’s intuition of loss, Walter Benjamin’s concept of the ‘decline of the aura,’ and Robert Klein’s reflections on the ‘anguish of the refer-
ent.” Such a "bracketing off" certainly allows Tafuri to construe a more generalized version of the modern anguish complex, even to trace it to the Renaissance; but in a deliberately shocking way, it also ignores historical distinctions of an "ideological" nature that are not as simple as the quoted "slogans" imply. In relation to the received history of political ideas, Tafuri’s "bracketing" begs the question: Is it indeed possible, or intellectually responsible, to bring together, except on a purely linguistic level, the nostalgic despair of a National Socialist ideologue, the resigned modernism of a German Jewish Marxist, and the phenomenological disquiet of a Romanian Jewish exile in Paris—the first, a melancholic survivor but unrepentant conservative; the second, an exile on the run from the Nazis; the third, a survivor of, in his own words, "compulsory labor for Jews," and a refugee from dictatorship after the war? Or, for that matter, can one join the sense of Sedlmayr’s "loss of center," which is tied to a prognosis of doom, to that of Benjamin’s loss of "aura," tied to a materialist understanding of the media and its political potential, and that of Klein’s perspective theory, which traced the "agony" of the disappearance of reference (in the emergence of abstract art) to the problems raised by a subject with a fixed point of view? It is interesting in this regard that Tafuri himself, perhaps for reasons of rhetorical symmetry, translates what Klein actually calls an "agony of reference" into an "anguish of the referent," thus shifting the entire argument from the subjective process of referentiality to the object of signification and historically reifying what in Klein’s terms was a living process activated by human subjects.

The pervasive sense of anguish that Tafuri describes in modern bourgeois society is, as he makes explicit, intimately connected to what Max Weber termed the "disenchantment" of the world as experienced by the modern intellectual. Pervasive throughout all of Weber’s writing, this theme was summarized succinctly in
his late lecture "Wissenschaft als Beruf" (Science as a vocation) of 1919: "The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world'" (Entzauberung der Welt). This disenchantment—a consequence of the stripping away of the "mythical" in the modern, a mythical that for Weber gave the human condition a "genuine plasticity"—was, as Tafuri illustrates in the third chapter of *Architecture and Utopia*, a logical result of the triumph of rationalism, the "freedom from values" inherent in the acceptance of science as the dominating force in the world. Tafuri’s historical project, on this level, was to reveal this disenchantment for what it was, and to see, with all the veils of ideology stripped away, the various avant-garde attempts to mirror this crisis of values as so many buffers against the anguish and shock of their disappearance. "Disenchantment," whether Weberian or later, thence became a leitmotif of Tafuri’s analysis. To take only one example from *Theories and History*, Tafuri labels the late work of Paul Rudolph as disenchanted: "the 'signs' used by Rudolph . . . [are] disquieting for their skeptical disenchantment." Tafuri here seems to be echoing Weber’s observation that "disenchantment" had produced a situation, for better or for worse, where "our greatest art is intimate rather than monumental," leading to Weber’s conclusion that "if we try to compel and to 'invent' a monumental sense of art, lamentable monstrosities will be produced."

But the "disenchantment"—literally "demythologization"—described by Tafuri seems also to have had deeper roots; if, as Weber remarked, a world without myths was the common inheritance of postrationalist intellectuals, Tafuri himself can hardly be exempted from the group. As he revealed in an interview with Françoise Véry in 1976, reflecting on the writing of *Theories and History*, he was far from having a critical distance from his own version of disenchantment. At the time of writing, he states: "We
were locked in a castle under a spell, the keys were lost, in a linguistic maze—the more we looked for a direction, the more we entered magic halls full of tortured dreams. Once you entered the maze, Ariadne’s thread was broken, and to go on from there you simply had to ignore Ariadne’s thread.” The book was written in the space of what Tafuri called “magic halls full of tortured dreams,” where Sade and Piranesi conjured their visions against those of Enlightenment reason, in a contemporary context that seemed to echo that of the late eighteenth century—Tafuri cites Godard’s *Une femme est une femme* and Peter Weiss’s *Marat/Sade*. Indeed, disenchantment was, as Asor Rosa points out, a fundamental characteristic of Tafuri’s stance as historian:

*Once the phase of the “critique of architectural ideology” came to a close, this left behind in the mind of its theoretician a sense of total disenchantment, as if he had become a total stranger from the mechanism of values, procedures and connivance embedded in any discipline with an academic status. . . . Leaving the “critique of ideology” behind did not mean returning to architectural ideology, not even to the discipline closer to architectural historiography; rather it meant understanding that in this field too one should come as close as possible to the certainty of the datum, resisting both for the present and the past, all ideological seductions. . . . There is a link between the . . . inexorable demolition of all present and past structures of self-illusion and self-mystification—and the full revelation of a . . . political vocation. . . . Once no veil any longer exists, all that remains is to study, understand, and represent the mechanisms of reality [with the instruments of objective inquiries]. Total disenchantment produces great historians.*  

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The historian of disenchantment, himself disenchanted, thus is enabled to enter the disenchanted realm of history without ideology. Perhaps it is here, imbricated with the stance of the historian without ideology, that Tafuri finds himself on the interior of a discourse for which he stands not only as its historian but as its exemplary figure. In this sense, within the "bracketing" of the anguish and loss of a Sedlmayr, a Benjamin, and a Klein, and despite his understandable desire to restrain the "surfeit" of meaning they disclose, might we not now include Tafuri himself?

And by the time Tafuri wrote the foreword to Ricerca in 1992, the historian of disenchantment was sufficiently identified with the disenchanted historian to enable these strange combinations, the result, it seems, of Tafuri’s sense of a more urgent and general purpose that called for a consideration of the century’s disenchantment "as a whole," and no longer concerned with small discrimination on behalf of a "good" or a "bad" kind. Thus Benjamin is paired with his apparent opposite, Sedlmayr, and Tafuri is enabled to push back to the Renaissance what had seemed to him in the first place the provisional origins of the crisis of modernity. The "long Renaissance" is given an overarching position above the successive "modernisms" that it houses; the collapse of perspective certainty as a guarantee of the central position of the humanist subject is identified as a direct outcome of, and contemporaneous with, the verification of the perspective rule itself.

Thus, in the first chapter of the Ricerca, the fiction of the "humanist" Brunelleschi is unmasked in the retelling of the "cruel and unreal comedy" that reveals the architect-perspectivist as an unscrupulous manipulator of human "identities" in the service of destabilizing identity itself. Similarly we realize, in Tafuri’s early essays on Alberti, that it is the troubled, nightmare-ridden figure of a sociopath attempting to use architecture to steer his way through imminent chaos that takes hold over the serene
mathematical and harmonious visions of a Wittkowerian analysis. In this unnerving vision of architecture as experiment conceived as a metaphoric game with human subjects (and for Tafuri, all designs are experiments in the real, scientific sense), the calculated "shocks" of the modernist avant-garde, the ruptures of Piranesian space, and the anamorphoses of the late baroque take their place within the same frame and as symptomatic events in the same systemic history of perspectivism. On these grounds, it is true that, whatever the motives or conclusions of the analyses, Sedlmayr, Benjamin, and Klein agree, as pathologists studying the same corpse may agree on the symptoms but vehemently reject the others' diagnoses. Tafuri’s historical "bracketing," then, does not refuse political or ideological distinctions, but rather understands all such distinctions as pertinent to an autopsy of the age as a whole. For such a task, a Weber has to be accompanied by his Spengler; a Sedlmayr by his Benjamin; a Klein by his Tafuri.
NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Fredric Jameson, A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present (London: Verso, 2002), 169. Jameson characterizes Greenberg as “that theoretician who more than any other can be credited as having invented the ideology of modernism full–blown and out of whole cloth” (ibid.).


4. See the excellent analysis by Panayotis Tournikiotis, The Historiography of Modern Architecture (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), which must form the basis of any serious study of the works of Pevsner, Zevi, Benevolo, Hitchcock, Collins, and Tafuri. Influenced by the semiotic structuralism of his thesis advisor Françoise Choay, Tournikiotis restricts his analysis to the structural comparison of key texts, deliberately removing any discussion of context or authors, in the belief that “the context . . . and the personalities . . . have nothing to tell us about the nature of the written discourse per se” (5–6). The present work, however, studies these relations specifically, understanding the writing of history, whether or not under the guise of objectivity, to form a practice immersed in the theory.
and design of architecture at any one moment, within a comprehensive practice that, as it embraces all aspects of the architectural field, might properly be called its “discourse.” A less “structuralist” and analytical introduction to the field is Demetri Porphyrios, ed., “On the Methodology of Architectural History,” special issue of Architectural Design 51, no. 7 (1981), which, in its range of critical essays by historians on historians, represents an important snapshot of the field in the late 1970s.

5. The first book to use “history” in its title was in fact Bruno Zevi’s Storia dell’architettura moderna (Turin: Einaudi, 1950); the first in English was Jürgen Joedicke’s A History of Modern Architecture, translated by James Palmes (London: Architectural Press, 1959) from his Geschichte der modernen Architektur: Synthese aus Form, Funktion und Konstruktion (Stuttgart: Gerd Hatje, 1958). It is interesting to consider that both are postwar reflections on a modernity already in the past and subject to serious critique, the one written in exile in the United States, and at Harvard, where the International Style was already academicized, the other in Germany on the wreckage of modernity’s darker follies; but both are by authors who sought to rescue the ideals and formal premises of modernism and set them on new democratic bases.


15. Ibid. (1973). 266; my translation. The English translation of the fourth (1976) edition of *Teorie e storia*, translated by Giorgio Verrecchia with a foreword by Dennis Sharp (London: Granada Publishing, 1980), is thoroughly unreliable and filled with omissions and mistakes. The present citation is an example, where “esperienze ‘informali’” referring to avant-garde experiments in the *informe* or “nonformal” as they had been tied back to prehistoric architectures, is rendered meaningless by the phrase “some abstract experiences.”
117. Ibid., 168, 169, 172.
118. Ibid., 207.
119. Banham, Los Angeles, 247.
121. Banham, Los Angeles, 23.
122. Reyner Banham, Scenes in America Deserta (Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith, 1982).

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2. Tafuri, Theories and History, 149.


4. Ibid.


"Studi e ipotesi di lavoro per il sistema direzionale di Roma," Casabella 264 (June 1962): 27–35; "Un’ipotesi per la città-territorio di Roma. Strutture produttive e direzionali nel comprensorio Pontino" (with Enrico Fattinnanzi for the studio AUA). Casabella 274 (April 1963): 26–37—all share this analytical approach to large-scale planning. Tafuri wrote, "The present historical moment of the modern movement is certainly characterized by an effort to widen its critical and operative themes: toward the definition of a new dimension of urban space, which corresponds to a new dimension in the very methods of planning." Tafuri, "Studi e ipotesi," 27.


12. Ibid., 4.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., 1; also cited in English in Ciucci, "The Formative Years," 17; translation slightly altered.


18. Ibid.


22. Ibid., 35; italics in source.

23. Ibid.


28. Ibid., 17.


36. Cited in ibid., 96.

37. Ibid., 96–97.


39. Ibid., 24.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 25. The English translation, Theories and History of Architecture (London: Granada, 1980), is consistently unreliable; a single example among many would be this passage, which translates ipocrasie as “disappointments.”

42. Ibid., 27.

43. Ibid., 34.


46. Ibid., 12; cited in Tafuri, Teorie e storia, 209.

47. Tafuri, Teorie e storia, 208.


50. Tafuri, Teorie e storia, preface to the second edition, 3.


52. Ibid., ix–x.

57. Tafuri, Interpreting the Renaissance, xxviii. I have inserted the significant terms from the Italian edition, Ricerca del Rinascimento (Turin: Einaudi, 1992).
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., xxix.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Manfredo Tafuri, “A Search for Paradigms: Project, Truth, Artifice,” trans. Daniel Sherer, Assemblage 28 (December 1995): 47. This is the first version of Sherer’s translation of the foreword to Ricerca, and is closer to the original Italian than that translated in Interpreting the Renaissance, xxvii.
63. Tafuri, Theories and History of Architecture, 7–8.
65. Tafuri, Interpreting the Renaissance, xxviii.
67. Tafuri, Theories and History, 156.
Contropiano period produced with the sense of ‘total disenchantment’ an estrangement still more total [un totale disincanto, una estranità ancora più totale] regarding the mechanism of values and connivance [omertà] that are the bases of any humanistic discipline academically understood.” Ibid.

EPILOGUE: POSTMODERN OR POSTHISTOIRE?


4. Ibid., 11.