

An Introduction to Architectural Theory

1968 to the Present

Harry Francis Mallgrave
and David Goodman

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Prelude

The 1960s

From the close of World War II until sometime in the middle of the 1960s two grand ideals ruled the architectural profession. One was a political faith in the vision of modernity – the meliorist belief that by affecting social change and imposing a universal environmental order architects could improve the human lot and repair a globe wrought by physical and moral devastation. The second was the belief that the most efficient way to achieve this amelioration was through technology and its application. Stating these ideals in less prosaic terms, one might say that the technological vision of a unified modernity had for two decades enchanted the mistress of architecture. Little did she suspect how swiftly his lure of excitement would pale.

In retrospect, we can of course find several signs of the impending separation along the way. As far back as 1947, Lewis Mumford raised the possibility of a regional modernism, only to be rudely censored by the self-anointed potentates of the Museum of Modern Art.¹ In the same year, Aldo van Eyck, at a Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in Bridgewater, challenged the overly rationalist underpinnings of modern design, yet he found few backers.² In 1953, at another CIAM conference in Aix-en-Provence, teams of architects based in Algeria and Morocco presented housing schemes far removed from approved CIAM models, while another team from London dared to challenge a few of the urban premises of the Athens Charter.³ And in 1959, Ernesto Rogers, the influential editor of the journal *Casabella-continuità*, loaded a double-barreled salvo against the status quo. In one chamber was the shell of an “Italian Retreat” from modernism, based on the recent fascination of a few architects with the “Neoliberty” forms at the start of the twentieth century. In the second

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Harry Francis Mallgrave and David Goodman.

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Figure P.1 BBPR, Torre Velasca, Milan (1950–1958). Image courtesy of Davide Secci.

chamber was the lethal pellet of historicism – that is, the desire to have a more tolerant modernism that would, on occasions, courteously entertain historical references. Oddly, the firing pin that had propelled the cartridge was Rogers’s own design (his firm BBPR’s) for the Torre Velasca (1950–1958), a modern concrete tower in downtown Milan whose cantilevered upper stories had for some critics evoked the “atmosphere” of Italian medieval towns. This time the response from official quarters was swift, as Rogers, at the CIAM’59 conference in Otterlo, was pounced upon by several critics who objected to his historical allusionism. And a few weeks earlier a glaring Reyner Banham had countered *Casabella’s* “Neoliberty” infatuation with an admonishing if not upbraiding metaphor:

To want to put on those old clothes is to be, in Marinetti’s words describing Ruskin, like a man who has attained full physical maturity, yet wants to sleep in his cot again, to be suckled again by his decrepit nurse, in order to regain the nonchalance of his childhood. Even by the purely local standards of Milan and Turin, then, Neoliberty is infantile regression.⁴

Technology and Ecology

By the close of the 1950s, Banham had, in fact, become a battalion commander within the technology forces, which in the next decade would enjoy their greatest triumphs. A man of literary brilliance, prolificacy, and acumen, he had spent the last half of the 1950s writing a dissertation on Italian Futurism under the tutelage of the eminent German refugee and historian Nikolaus Pevsner. He did so while participating in the animated discussions of London's New Brutalist movement and hobnobbing in particular with the iconoclastic wing of the Independent Group. The latter was an arts forum within London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, and its participants included Richard Hamilton, Lawrence Alloway, and John McHale. They were united in their hippish enthusiasms for American jazz, pop culture, Hollywood films, science fiction, and Detroit automobiles: testifying to the rising anima of a beat generation on the verge of reaching out for something bigger.

Banham's published version of his dissertation, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1960), was a milestone in architectural theory – less for its scholarship and more for its introductory and concluding chapters on “Functionalism and Technology.” Banham's principal point was that the “First Machine Age,” which had been inspired by such things as automobiles and ocean liners, had now been superseded (but not reversed) by a much more transfixing “Second Machine Age.” Defining this descending era were the newfangled gizmos of televisions, radios, electric shavers, hair dryers, tape recorders, mixers, grinders, washing machines, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, and polishers – those items that were empowering the “housewife” of today with more horsepower than an industrial worker commanded at the start of the century. If the automobile in the 1920s was simply a status symbol for cultural elites, the television (“the symbolic machine of the Second Machine Age”) made democratic that crucial communicational objective of “dispensing mass entertainment.”⁵ All the new Machine Age lacked was a proper theory.

Through a series of lectures and writings over the next few years, Banham set out to repair this deficiency, and for him what was needed, from an increasingly radicalized perspective, was a more thoroughgoing embrace of technology and its conceptualization. Such a strategy was nevertheless fraught with dangers, at least for the increasingly complacent architectural profession:

The architect who proposes to run with technology knows now that he will be in fast company, and that, in order to keep up, he may have to emulate the Futurists and discard his whole cultural load, including the professional

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garments by which he is recognized as an architect. If, on the other hand, he decides not to do this, he may find that a technological culture has decided to go on without him.⁶

Banham's decision two years later, on the pages of London's leading architectural journal, *Architectural Review*, to put architecture "On Trial" for its vacillation must also be considered within the context of the contemporary faith in megastructural solutions for any and all urban problems.⁷ Britain was already building several monolithic cities, but the younger generation had more grandiose aspirations. In the late 1950s the Hungarian-Israeli architect Yona Friedman, in founding the Groupe d'Etudes d'Architecture (GEAM), had broached the idea of "spatial city" by proposing a global effort to build 1000 new cities of three million inhabitants each. Friedman was working with a circle of artists and thinkers – among them Eckhard Schulze-Fielitz, Paul Maymont, Constant (Nieuwenhuys), and Frei Otto – and he proffered his "mobile architecture" as a response to the "perpetual transformation" of a restless society. Residents would now have the freedom to plug their "dwelling cells" anywhere into a multistory space-frame lifted above the abandoned landscape. Even food production would be cultivated in elevated urban greenhouses.⁸

In the same years, the Japanese Metabolists were producing their own technological extravaganzas in response to the population issues of urban crowding.⁹ London, meanwhile, was being entertained by the comic-book fantasies of Archigram, another group of futurists smitten with the technological bug. Perhaps the decisive year for their efforts was 1964, when Peter Cook's "Plug-In City" and Ron Herron's "Walking City" made their spectacular debuts.¹⁰

The intellectual guru behind this grandiose euphoria was R. Buckminster Fuller, or "Bucky" was he was generally known to his worldwide admirers. Since the late 1940s Fuller had been stalking the lecture halls of architectural schools across all continents with his moral gospel of nonlinear thinking and "ephemeralization," by which a building should be judged not by the usual aesthetic beliefs but rather by its weight or degree of ecological integrity. If the American Institute of Architects had been willing to overlook the eccentricities of his "Dymaxion" house (the century's first definitive essay on sustainable thinking) as far back as 1928, by the early 1960s Fuller could no longer be ignored. His mailbox was packed with offers for visiting professorships and speaking engagements, and laurels were only just beginning to descend. Such publicity, of course, would culminate with the geodesic dome he built for Expo '67 in Montreal, but those who focus on this aspect of his thought overlook his more important contributions to theory.

As early as 1955 Fuller had been in contact with London's Independent Group and the artist John McHale, to whom (in a letter) he had criticized the "International Style" modernists for their superficial concern with the aesthetics of the bathroom rather than with the technology of the plumbing behind the walls. Banham was so moved by the criticism that he published a portion of the letter in the concluding chapter of *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*.¹¹ McHale was also duly impressed, so much so that in 1962 he gave up his artistic practice to move to the United States and collaborate with Fuller. In that year he published the first architectural monograph on Fuller's work, and in the following year he worked with his mentor in compiling the first volume of the *Inventory of World Resources: Human Trends and Needs*.¹² By the end of the decade McHale himself would be recognized as a leading futurist.

Fuller, however, was already branching out in other directions. In 1963 he consulted with the Advanced Structures Research Team at NASA, which was planning the first manned flights to the moon. In his usual way, Fuller turned the problem on its head by referring the issue of an interspatial ecosystem back to Earth, where "space technology's autonomous living package and the automobile industry's engagement in livingry devices clearly indicate that the coming decade will see the mass production of autonomous living mechanics for use on earth."¹³ In simpler terms, the Earth, too, was a spaceship, and the lessons of this research must be redirected to the world's housing problems because the "old building arts" (read "architecture") had essentially failed to keep up with advancing technologies and were, in any case, accommodating the housing needs of only a small portion of the world's population.

Such a theme was also echoed in 1963 in the "Delos Declaration," a pledge signed by Fuller and 33 other intellectuals on the sacred island of Delos – the mythical and legally uninhabitable birthplace of Apollo – after an eight-day cruise of the Greek islands. The cruise, patterned on the trip from Marseilles to Athens that had produced the Athens Charter, had been the brainchild of the architect and urban planner Constantinos Doxiadis, who gathered experts in various fields in an attempt to come up with a science (ekistics) to solve the problem of random global growth.¹⁴

Thus the idea of "world planning" becomes the keynote theme of Fuller's efforts in the second half of the 1960s, just as the notion that we command an interspatial planet with limited resources began to capture the public's attention.¹⁵ Kenneth Boulding made this point cogently in a short paper that he prepared for the Committee on Space Sciences in 1965. Entitled "Earth as a Space Ship," he lambasted the fledgling ecological movement ("Ecology as a science has hardly moved beyond the

level of bird-watching”) for failing to see the implications of unrestrained population growth and pollution on the ecosystem.¹⁶ What the world needed was to shift from fossil fuels to energies harnessed from the oceans and the sun, as well as to study the Earth’s system of checks and balances. As he concluded: “We do not understand, for instance, the machinery of ice ages, the real nature of geological stability or disturbance, the incidence of volcanism and earthquakes, and we understand fantastically little about that enormously complex heat engine known as the atmosphere.”¹⁷

Fuller responded in 1965 by launching the World Design Science Decade, a project that he originally intended to become the centerpiece of Expo ’67. Better known as “World Game,” the object was to hook up computers (another technological innovation) with college students from around the world in order to catalogue global resources and devise the most efficient ways of employing them. The project, originally centered at Southern Illinois University, came into fruition in the summer of 1969, and shortly thereafter hundreds of students were participating on campuses internationally, many in makeshift geodesic domes. In the same year, Ian McHarg published his classic work, *Design with Nature*. Fuller also contributed a bevy of books directed to environmental themes: *Utopia or Oblivion* (1969), *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* (1969), *I Seem to be a Verb* (1970), *Approaching the Benign Environment* (1970), *Intuition* (1972), and *Earth, Inc.* (1973). This torrent of writings culminated in the second half of the 1970s with the appearance of his two volumes on *Synergetics*, which brought into full view the prodigious scope of his accomplishments as a geometer. Architectural students in the 1960s had a particular fondness for Fuller’s Daedalian ideas, especially because Bucky was, in turn, lauding the architect as the last of the comprehensive thinkers, indeed as humanity’s last great hope.

Social Underpinnings of Modernism

If we turn to the sociological component of this technological fervor, we find a recurring caveat to this reformative vision – modernism’s general lack of popularity with the public. None of this was particularly new, however. The stark forms of early modernists were not especially well received in Germany during the 1920s, and even less so in Britain in the following decade, when they arrived in the portfolios of German architects seeking asylum. The English critic J. M. Richards recognized this fact in 1940 when he opened his book *An Introduction to Modern Architecture* by acknowledging the public’s dislike of the new style. He believed, however,

that the public would come around when they became aware of modernism's aesthetic and constructional underpinnings.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the problem persisted, so much so that in 1947 Richards once again brought the matter to the attention of CIAM, which, after some polite discussion, tabled the issue.

The situation was similar in North America, even though the corporate world in particular was quick to embrace the economic advantages of the new steel-and-glass technologies – tall buildings with curtain walls. In the United States opposition to the largely European face of international modernism actually had two roots. One was the alternative modernism that had been evolving in North America since the 1890s, first with the schools of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright and second with the various regional interpretations of modernism in the South and along the West Coast. Another source of discontent can be found in the “modern” urban design strategies of the postwar years. Few today remember that many of the urban renewal beliefs that are generally attributed to Lyndon Johnson's “Great Society” programs of the 1960s were first implemented during the Kennedy and Eisenhower administrations. And it was the bulldozing of the urban fabrics of so many American cities during these years – together with the social barriers of freeways often imposed by political machines – that contributed to the rapid urban decline of the 1960s. The high-rise “projects” that architects so glibly accepted would, within a decade, become the failed urban ghettos displaying all of the attendant problems of racial segregation, poverty, welfare, and crime.

In fact it was only in the 1960s that architects and critics began to recognize the serious limitations of such strategies or question the rationale of their existence. Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), with its devastating attack on the “Radiant Garden City Beautiful,” led the way and ushered in what might be called an appellate review of urban theory. She was, in fact, preceded in this regard on occasions by Lewis Mumford, but also by Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960), which – through his cognitive analysis of a city's “Imageability” – challenged modernism's visual leveling of the urban environment. Herbert Gans, in the *Urban Villagers* (1962), vividly described the vibrant social life of one of Boston's Italian-immigrant communities – on the eve of its eradication by “urban renewal” efforts. Martin Anderson's *The Federal Bulldozer* (1964), with its sobering statistical analysis, coolly took apart the social and economic fallacies of such policies. And by the mid-1960s, social scientists such as Edward T. Hall, Robert Sommer, and Oscar Newman were exposing the social and physical failings of declining urban centers from anthropological, psychological, and architectural

perspectives. Few of these studies, however, had any effect on the political decisions-makers in Washington, or elsewhere for that matter.

An interesting early study in this regard was the small book *Community and Privacy* (1963), coauthored by Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander. The Russian-born Chermayeff had arrived at Harvard University by way of Britain and Chicago's Institute of Design, and his principal focus was on the sociology of housing. The book's stated intention was to lay the foundation for "the development of a Science of Environmental Design," an architectural discipline that would draw upon and integrate analytical research from other sciences.¹⁹ It is also one of the first ecological studies of the postwar years, as the authors place much emphasis on countering the urban flight to the suburbs and addressing the stress of modern life. Yet it suffered from one fatal flaw – the blank-slate belief that human "taste" was generally malleable, and that all it would take to alter human behavior was a little governmental persuasion.

Nevertheless, part two of the book became the springboard for the evolving work of Christopher Alexander. The Austrian had immigrated to England with his family during the war years and eventually studied mathematics and architecture at Cambridge University. In the late 1950s he began doctoral studies at Harvard, and in *Community and Privacy* he supplemented the work of Chermayeff by setting out 33 design variables for prototypical urban housing, which he organized (with the aid of IBM's 704 computers) into sequences of groupings. This parametric design strategy, made necessary he felt by the "insoluble levels of complexity today," was also the basis for his doctoral dissertation, "The Synthesis of Form; Some Notes on a Theory," which he completed 1962.²⁰ It appeared in print two years later under the title *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*.

This book, with its analytic and synthetic model for designers, represents another face of the 1960s: the desire to find a sophisticated design methodology to accommodate the many social variables that should be taken into account. His approach was to locate possible design parameters, synthesize them into subsets and tree diagrams, and work through all potential "misfits," or unsatisfactory interactions between form and content. He also distinguished between "self-conscious" and "unselfconscious" design, by which he challenged what Western architects believed to be good design (for Alexander the perfect correspondence between form and content) with examples from indigenous or third-world cultures. Here, he argued, existing building traditions and local materials tended to filter out cultural biases. The book and the dissertation conclude with an appendix containing 141 design parameters for the design of an "Indian Village."

Alexander's inductive model, as he himself later noted, had one problem, which was that the programmatic phase of his design process was largely subjective. But there was also another issue. At the Team 10 meeting in 1962 Alexander had presented his work on the Indian village and engaged in a heated discussion with Aldo van Eyck, who likewise was interested in an architecture grounded in humanist ideals.²¹ The incident led Alexander to reflect on his own tree-like diagrams, and in an essay of 1965, "A City is Not a Tree," he amended his earlier mode of diagramming in favor of a semi-lattice structure, whereby branches can overlay with one another in multiple ways.²² Examples of tree-like thinking, for Alexander, were many of the new cities that had been started or built in recent years – Columbia and Greenbelt in Maryland, British new towns, Chandigarh, and Brasília. All had failed, he argued, because of their functional separation of parts and hierarchical structures. His contrary (anti-modern) example of a semi-lattice or "natural" city was Cambridge, England, where the individual colleges, instead of forming a defined campus separate from the town's activities, are interspersed within the surrounding coffee houses, pubs, shops, and student lodgings. Such richness or ambiguity, he suggests, is the nature of human life.

Alexander's paper represented an interesting turning-point in his theoretical development. His work, up until this time, had largely fallen under the positivistic rubric of design methodology, but with his founding of the Center for Environmental Structure at Berkeley in 1967, he shifted his efforts to creating "patterns" for architectural design. Gone were the mathematical symbols and lattice diagrams, which were replaced with the more flexible notion of a descriptive "pattern" – an "if/then" solution to a particular problem predicated on a context and backed up by research. These patterns could be applied to the individual buildings, to small parts of buildings, or to cities as a whole.

The system made its debut in 1968 with *A Pattern Language Which Generates Multi-Service Centers*, but perhaps a more influential spur to his development was his involvement with a United Nations housing project for Lima, Peru, for which the architect, Peter Land, was serving as Project Manager. Land was a graduate of London's Architectural Association and later joined the faculty at Yale University. In 1966 he convinced the Peruvian government and the United Nations to sponsor, among other projects, a major international competition for a demonstration housing project, *Proyecto Experimental de Vivienda* (PREVI), that would seek prototypical solutions for third-world housing. In opposition to the "superblock" schemes so evident in the 1960s, Land's plan of 1970 called for a high-density, compact development of low-rise housing that separated pedestrians from automobiles and featured an internal pedestrian spine

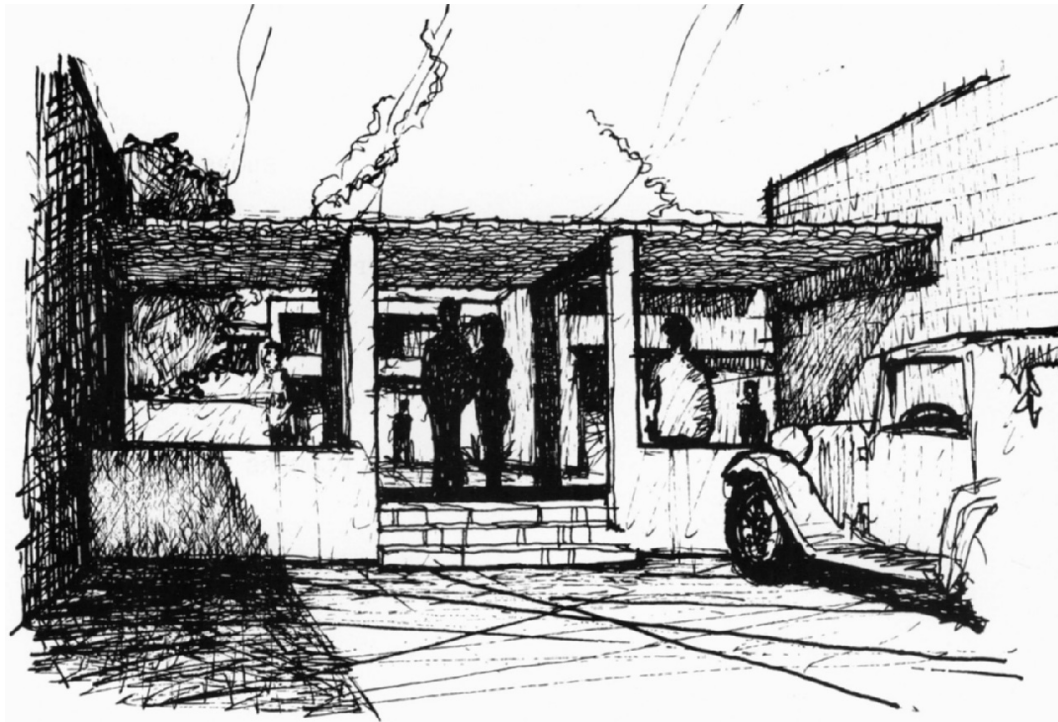


Figure P.2 Image depicting a “Cell Gateway,” from Christopher Alexander, Sanford Hirshen, Sara Ishikawa, Christie Coffin, and Shlomo Angel, *Houses Generated by Patterns* (1969). Image courtesy of the Center for Environmental Structure.

around which were gathered community facilities, gardens, and individual neighborhoods totaling 450 units. Clustered housing arrangements included interior patios, through-ventilation, and expandable systems featuring inexpensive, earthquake-resistant construction. Twenty-four architectural firms contributed to the project – 12 Peruvian teams and 12 international firms, including the office of Alexander.²³

Alexander and his associates responded not just with plans but with another book of 67 patterns, *Houses Generated by Patterns* (1969), largely devised from field research conducted in Peru. The patterns, which Alexander hoped “may begin to define a new indigenous architecture for Peru,” incorporated such features as clustering, inwardly focused housing “cells,” parking (tiny lots), and the emphasis on pedestrian routes. His patterns were particularly interesting in their sensitivity to Peruvian cultural habits, such as the need for an evening dance hall, walk-through schools, strict intimacy gradients, and transitional entrances within the layout of individual houses. They were less successful in a constructional sense, as well as in their overall intention to reestablish “vernacular” traditions. They nevertheless became the basis for his highly influential studies of the following decade, which we will consider later.

1968

All of this activity, however well intentioned, was interrupted by the cataclysmic events of the late 1960s. In the United States the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 had caused the first crack in America's Cold War facade, and within a year his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, would make the calamitous decision to escalate the Vietnam conflict and supply the necessary infantrymen through a much expanded military draft. At the same time, the Civil Rights Movement, led by Martin Luther King Jr, was taking shape in the American South. Political protest was at first peaceful, but after a few legislative victories in local and national voter registration, the violence in Selma and the rioting in Watts would, by 1965, shatter the calm. And with each summer encounter, the conflagrations in the Black ghettos across the country grew more violent and widespread. These riots took place alongside the ubiquitous antiwar marches, which increasingly galvanized a broad coalition of disenchanted youths. This ideological spectrum of these "baby-boom" protesters ranged from Marxists to pacifists, feminists, academics, celebrities, and of course the hippies. Overnight an entire generation, urged on by the anti-establishment lyrics of a newly electrified music, united in a counter-cultural rebellion that was immortalized by Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore's phrase, "You can't *go* home again."²⁴

European students were no less volatile, but the malaise seems to have been driven more by internal factors. The young in Europe, in general, were also far more serious in their politics, with their nearly unanimous socialist fervor being differentiated only by varying strategies of militancy. By the mid-1960s the perennially unstable governments of Italy, for instance, had descended into a condition of sustained anarchy and guerrilla warfare as the system came under attack from a revolutionary coalition composed of students and trade unions in the north to discontented peasants in the south. This fact, too, had its architectural implications, because Marxist theory – spanning the cultural divide between the anti-industrialism of William Morris to the technocratic anxiety of Herbert Marcuse – was generally suspicious of, if not openly hostile to, technological progress.

Also playing into the European chaos were the street theatrics of the 1960s. One of the more vocal of these groups was the Dada-inspired Situationist International, a leftist coalition formed in 1957. After various permutations, the tactics of Guy Debord came to define the group in the late 1960s, the principles of which he had outlined in his book *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967). It was in many ways an updating of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's earlier thesis regarding the "culture industry,"

in which Debord outlined the stratagem of 221 short theses (many of them willfully plagiarized and dissimulated from others), from which he attacked advanced capitalism, the mass media, consumer culture (commodity fetishism), religion, and family – in short, anything remotely connected with “bourgeois” life. In the end he argued that Western culture had become hopelessly addicted to the “spectacular images” viewed nightly on the evening news, and there was little hope of remedying the situation. The Situationists chose to counter this debilitating habit by acting out anarchic “situations” on the street; in fact they prided themselves on being “specialists in play.”

1968 became the quintessential year of the spectacle, both in Europe and elsewhere. For the United States it opened portentously with an American surveillance ship being captured off the North Korean coast, and one week later the Vietcong launched their Tet offensive in South Vietnam, in which 60 000 soldiers crossed into the south and penetrated all the way to Saigon. The fierce opposition to this bloodbath would lead Lyndon Johnson, by the end of March, to back out of his run for a second term in office, throwing the American presidential race wide open. Meanwhile, the year opened in central Europe with the Slovak Alexander Dubček ousting the first secretary of the Communist Party, Antonín Novotný. It marked a jubilant revolt of the Czech and Slovakian people from 20 years of Soviet rule, leading to the “Prague Spring,” in which the population, long cut off from the rest of Europe by the Iron Curtain, celebrated their newfound freedom of expression.

This ebullience proved a little too much for French students, who in March would take over the Nanterre campus of the University of Paris and demand major university reforms. April witnessed the tragic assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, which inflamed already high tensions. The arrest of demonstrators at the Sorbonne in early May touched off the guerilla tactics, strikes, barricades, and rioting that cordoned off much of Paris for nearly two months. Italian students were simultaneously occupying most of the major universities, all the while joining with workers in shutting down large sectors of Italy’s economic production. In June, Robert Kennedy was gunned down in a hotel kitchen in Los Angeles, and the summer not only witnessed the usual race riots and antiwar demonstrations but also the live television coverage of the “police riot” at the Democratic Party’s convention in Chicago. And as angry students and intellectuals in Europe were glibly hoisting banners depicting Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, the Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev, in early August, responded to the Czechoslovakian people’s “socialism with a human face” with tanks and 500 000 Warsaw Pact troops. A shackled Dubček was

dragged to Moscow for “consultation” and returned to Prague television cameras a few weeks later to renounce his crimes – tearfully, of course. The paradoxes inherent in the political and military spectacles of 1968 were, for many observers, seemingly underwhelming.

Neither did the once high aspirations of modern architects elude the sound and fury of this year. As we suggested earlier, champions of modernity and progress, with all of their benign hopes for creating a better world, had, up until this time, presented a nearly unified vision of the future. This noble professional persona, along with its utopian impulses, lay fractured in ways that no one as yet fully understood. Not only was this mantra of common purpose and technological progress soon to be rejected by the younger members of the profession, but – even more unsettling – the mistress of architecture would indeed leave the household. She could no longer *go* home.

Part One

1970s

1

Pars Destruens 1968–1973

If the social and political events of 1968 made manifest the outlines of an architectural crisis of confidence, it certainly did not offer much in the way of details or explanation. In fact, if one simply looks at the professional journals and published texts of around this time, one might be hard pressed to find any evidence of a rupture with past practices. For instance, Vittorio Gregotti concluded his *New Directions in Italian Architecture* in 1968 with a chapter on the student revolts within Italian schools of architecture, but none of his illustrations suggested a pending break with the modernist tradition. In Europe the most significant project on the boards in 1968 was the complex planned for the Munich Olympics of 1972, a design of Günther Behnisch in collaboration with Frei Otto. Similarly, Robert Stern ended his *New Directions in American Architecture* of 1969 with Paul Rudolph's project for Stafford Harbor, Virginia – fully within the mainstream of high modernism. In the same year, Louis Kahn, with buildings going up in Exeter, New Haven, Fort Worth, and India, was representing the Philadelphia School, while one of the busiest offices in the United States, Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates, was overseeing the construction of Memorial Coliseum and the Knights of Columbus complex in New Haven. If there was one omen suggesting the demise of modernism in 1969 it was the passing of Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe – the last two “masters” of the gilded pantheon.

But journals and books do not always tell the story, particularly in that the principal divide that came out of 1968 was a generational one. Moreover, it was a divide that would oppose the ideological platform of high modernism, not with a unifying counter-strategy but rather with a fragmentation of theory, tentative starts and stops in how, indeed, one

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Harry Francis Mallgrave and David Goodman.

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could proceed. There was also a sharp political and cultural divide that separated North American and European theory in the years surrounding 1968, which can be illustrated by reviewing the contrary positions of Robert Venturi and Aldo Rossi. Both published important books in 1966 in which they voiced their quiet dissatisfaction with the status quo. Both continued to develop their ideas over the next few years, and both, subsequently, would lead identifiable schools of thought that – by the middle of the 1970s – could be characterized as distinct branches on the sprouting tree of “postmodernism.” Nevertheless, the two schools were radically at odds in their theoretical underpinnings.

Venturi and Scott Brown

Robert Venturi was the first to establish his credentials as an apostate. He received his architecture degree from Princeton in 1950 and, after stays in the offices of Oscar Stonorov, Louis Kahn, and Eero Saarinen, he won the Rome Prize in 1954 and embarked on an extended residence in that city. He entered private practice in Philadelphia in 1957 and within a few years had carried out a number of small commissions, among them the design of his mother’s house in Chestnut Hill (1959–1964), the North Penn Visiting Nurses Association (1961–1963), and the Guild House (1961–1966). Equally important for his development was his connection with the University of Pennsylvania, where in the early 1960s he taught one of the first courses on theory within an American architectural program. From his notes for this class he composed a preliminary manuscript for a book in 1963, and three years later, after revisions, it was published by the Museum of Modern Art under the title *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*.

The book, which aspired to be a “gentle manifesto,” is more complex than a first reading might suggest. To start with, it is a composite humanist tract drawing upon the recent work of Louis Kahn and Alvar Aalto, the anthropological perspective of Aldo van Eyck, the semiotic interests of Tomás Maldonado, the sociology of Herbert Gans, as well as Venturi’s own fascination with both mannerism and the relatively recent phenomenon of pop art. It opens with a plea for a mannerist phase of modernism, which he articulates through a set of formal or compositional maneuvers drawn in part from literary theory. These are strategies for injecting complexity and contradiction into design, which he explains in chapters with such titles as the “Double-Functioning Element,” “Contradiction Adapted,” and “Contradiction Juxtaposed.”

Another novelty of the book is its heavy reliance on historical examples, many of which are mannerist and baroque buildings from Italy and the United Kingdom. They serve to buffer his case for visual complexity and ambiguity, and this use of history to support a contemporary case for design was unusual at this time. Still another aspect of the short book is its frank, polemical tone. In an often cited example, he subverts such high-minded modernist clichés as Mies van der Rohe’s reported adage, “Less is more,” by playfully responding “Less is a bore.” Then again, his examples, repeatedly drawn from architects like Kahn and Aalto, testify to the fact that his rejection of “the puritanically moral language of orthodox Modern architecture” was by no means unconditional or even considerable at this date. Moreover, Venturi presents his (often perceptual) arguments for a mannerist phase of modernism with a certain literary aplomb.

But the book on occasions also betrays what would become Venturi’s evolving thought. In scattered places in the later chapters, the theme of formal ambiguity is conjoined with sub-themes that are lurking, as it were, within the text. One is his fondness for “rhetorical” or “honky-tonk” elements drawn from popular culture. Venturi justifies their incorporation into a new and more inclusive architecture first on the basis of their (pop-art inspired) realism and second as a gesture of social protest against a political system currently engaged in an unpopular war.¹ Another sub-theme to emerge is Venturi’s incipient populism. For instance, in arguing against Peter Blake’s comparison of the chaos of “Main Street” with the orderliness of Thomas Jefferson’s campus at the University of Virginia, Venturi insists that not only are such comparisons meaningless but they also raise the question of “is not Main Street almost all right?”² It is a scarcely subtle challenge to modernist sensibilities with regard to the postwar emphasis on large-scale planning and compositional order, and Venturi’s concluding sentence of the book reveals that he was already on the verge of adopting a more radical position with respect to the issue: “And it is perhaps from the everyday landscape, vulgar and disdained, that we can draw the complex and contradictory order that is valid and vital for our architecture as an urbanistic whole.”³

It is around this time – in 1965 or 1966 – that the formidable influence of Denise Scott Brown also becomes evident. This Zambian-born architect, together with her husband, Robert Scott Brown, had come to the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1950s to study under Kahn. Robert died in a tragic accident in 1959, but Denise advanced her interest in urban studies by taking courses with David Crane, Herbert Gans, and Paul Davidoff, among others. Prior to coming to Philadelphia, she had attended the Architectural Association in London and thus had a front-row seat for

the “New Brutalist” phenomenon of the mid-1950s. It was in part this critical perspective (a gritty antipathy toward high modernism) that she brought to Penn, and after joining the faculty she collaborated with Venturi in the course of theory between 1962 and 1964.

The following year Scott Brown took a visiting position at the University of California at Berkeley, where she co-taught a course with the somewhat controversial urban sociologist Melvin Webber. In a now classic essay of 1964 he had taken to task the axiom that cities should be organized around a central downtown hub or regional center. He pointed to the transformation taking place in communication patterns – the fact that many businesses interact not locally but nationally or globally – and argued that in the future it will be these electronic patterns (not such traditional features as urban spaces) that will become “the essence of the city and of city life.”⁴

Scott Brown, together with Gordon Cullen, responded in 1965 with several articles under the title “The Meaningful City,” which analyzed the city under the four themes of perception, messages, meaning, and the modern image. What united these analyses was the idea of a “symbol,” which was at heart a criticism of the city as envisioned by postwar planners. In the view of Scott Brown, planners were failing to understand urban forms and the symbolic way in which most inhabitants read them: “We do not lack for symbols, but our efforts to use them are unsubtle and heavy handed. In the planning offices of most cities even this much is not achieved, and the situation goes by default.”⁵ This focus on urban communication was the new perspective that Scott Brown offered Venturi – when the two architects married in the summer of 1967. From this juncture their writings and ideas became a collaborative effort.

Venturi’s populism and Scott Brown’s urban focus first became evident in a joint studio the two taught at Yale in 1967, which considered the redesign of a subway station in New York City. In the following year, as much of the world was descending into chaos, the two architects offered their Yale students a studio on “The Strip” in Las Vegas. The results were first published in two essays that appeared in 1968, and together they formed the cornerstones of their book *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972).

In the first essay the two chided modern architects for their elitist and purist displeasure with existing conditions, and especially the commercial vernacular of the city. In their view, the professional establishment was pretentiously abandoning the tradition of iconology and thereby standing aloof from the “architecture of persuasion.” Comparing their recent trip to Las Vegas to the revelation architects traditionally experience when visiting the historic squares of Italy, Venturi and Scott Brown made their point in an overtly controversial way:

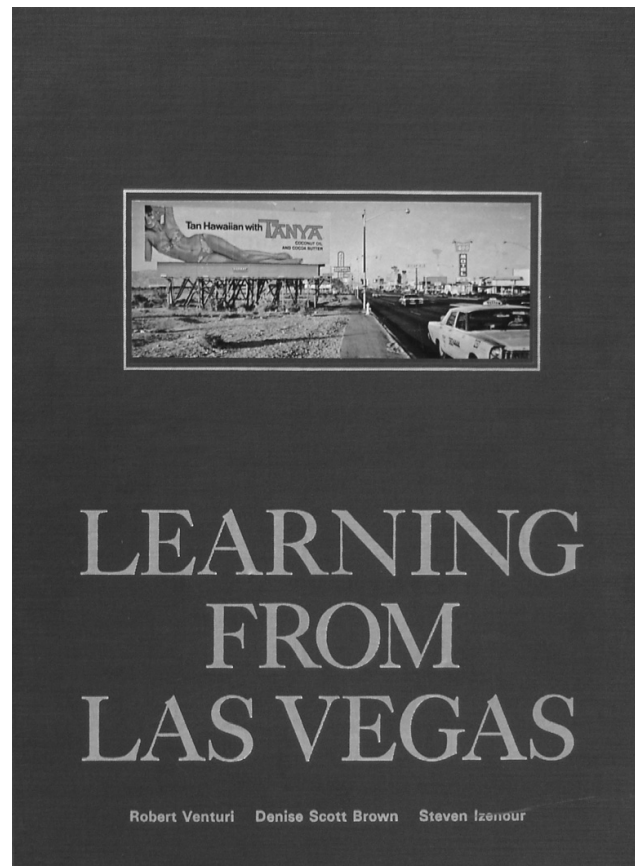


Figure 1.1 *Learning from Las Vegas*, by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, published by The MIT Press, © MIT 1972.

For young Americans in the 1940s, familiar only with the auto-scaled, grid-iron city, and the antiurban theories of the previous architectural generation, the traditional urban spaces, the pedestrian scale, and the mixtures yet continuities of styles of the Italian piazzas were a significant revelation. They rediscovered the piazza. Two decades later architects are perhaps ready for similar lessons about large open space, big scale, and high speed. Las Vegas is to the Strip what Rome is to the Piazza.⁶

In their second essay of 1968, Scott Brown and Venturi drew their famous distinction between the “sign which *is* the building” (the duck) and the “sign which *fronts* the building” (later to be named the decorated shed). They candidly expressed their preference for the latter, if only because it “is an easier, cheaper, more direct and basically more honest approach to the question of decoration; it permits us to get on with the task of making conventional buildings conventionally and to deal with their symbolic needs with a lighter, defter touch.”⁷ The implications of this preference for their own practice would, of course, be immense, but so too would their well-defined break with modernism’s technological vision. Actually, they

emphatically made this last point in the final pages of *Learning from Las Vegas* by countering Mies van der Rohe's "symbolically exposed but substantially encased steel frame" with John Ruskin's "once-horrifying statement" that architecture is but "the decoration of construction."⁸

Such sentiments would not go unchallenged, but interestingly the push-back came not from established modernists but from younger architects of the same generation with competing views. In 1970 the Argentine painter Tomás Maldonado, who some years earlier had pioneered courses on communication at the Hochschule für Gestaltung at Ulm, responded sharply to such ideas by insisting that the neon signs of Las Vegas represented neither a populist act nor a condition of visual richness but rather "chit-chat," a "depth of communicative poverty" that simply pandered "to the needs of casino and motel owners, and to the needs of real estate speculators."⁹

An even more pointed rebuttal appeared in 1971 in a special bilingual issue of Italy's leading journal, *Casabella*, a number that was orchestrated by Peter Eisenman. Scott Brown was appropriately allowed to set the stage with an essay entitled "Learning from Pop," in which she expanded the lesson plan of Las Vegas by noting that architects should also study "Los Angeles, Levittown, the swinging singles on the Westheimer Strip, golf resorts, boating communities, Co-op City, the residential backgrounds to soap operas, TV commercials and mass mag ads, billboards, and Route 66."¹⁰ Another part of the new curriculum is the beloved suburban home and its owner's quaint touches of respectability: sweeping lawns, decorative plantings, driveway gateways, columns, and coach lamps beside the front door (her Yale studio of 1970 was entitled "Learning from Levittown"). Architects should come here to learn, she continues, in part because of the massive failure of urban renewal programs in America, in part because of the liberal culture of elitism that rules the profession. Scott Brown counters with a defiant populist stance:

The forms of the pop landscape are as relevant to us now, as were the forms of antique Rome to the Beaux-Arts, Cubism, and Machine Architecture to the early Moderns, and the industrial midlands and the Dogon to Team 10, which is to say extremely relevant, and more so than the latest bathysphere launch pad, or systems hospital (or even, *pace* Banham, the Santa Monica pier).¹¹

Scott Brown's relatively brief polemic was rejoined by much lengthier remarks by Kenneth Frampton, which picked up where Maldonado's earlier criticisms had ended. With opening citations by Hermann Broch, the Vesnin brothers, Hannah Arendt, and Herbert Marcuse – as well as some

particularly gruesome photographs of an automobile accident by Andy Warhol – Frampton counters her main contention with great seriousness:

Do designers really need elaborate sociological ratification *à la* Gans, to tell them that what they want is what they already have? No doubt Levittown could be brought to yield an equally affirmative consensus in regard to current American repressive policies, both domestic and foreign. Should designers like politicians wait upon the dictates of a silent majority, and if so, how are they to interpret them? Is it really the task of under-employed design talent to suggest to the constrained masses of Levittown – or elsewhere – that they might prefer the extravagant confines of the West Coast nouveau-riche; a by now superfluous function which has already been performed more than adequately for years by Madison Avenue? In this respect there is now surely little left of our much vaunted pluralism that has not already been overlaid with the engineered fantasies of mass taste.¹²

Frampton further rejects the values of a society that gauges its standard of living by its automobiles, television sets, and airplanes, and it is ultimately the critical theory of the Frankfurt School that he embraces as well as the ideas of Clement Greenberg – where the role of the artistic avant-garde is precisely to resist capitalist culture and its seemingly inevitable production of kitsch.

Rossi and Tafuri

Rossi's thought during these same years displays a similar antipathy toward modernist ideals, but from a very contrary perspective. The Milan native received his architectural training at that city's Polytechnic University in the 1950s, and, while still a student, he was invited by Ernesto Rogers to write for *Casabella-continuità*. Altogether, Rossi penned 31 articles, which included book reviews and essays on both historical and topical issues, such as the Neoliberty phenomenon. In the early 1960s he began his academic career, and in 1965 he joined the faculty at his alma mater in Milan. His architectural output in the first half of the decade was minimal, with his most important projects being the Loosian-inspired Villa ai Ronchi (1960) and the monumental fountain for the city-square at Segrate (1965). The latter, with its generous cylindrical support and extruded triangular pediment, announced his fascination with primary forms, very much in the reductive tradition of the Marc-Antoine Laugier.

Rossi's turning point, on the theoretical front at least, was his book of 1966, *L'architettura della città* (architecture in the city). The study has several important (mostly Marxist) antecedents, among them studies by

Giuseppe Samonà, Leonardo Benevolo, and Carlo Aymonino.¹³ As with Venturi's contemporary effort, Rossi's book injects a breath of freshness into the otherwise languid discourse of the mid-1960s. Based on the work of a number of French geographers, it is a scholarly study as well as a sustained argument against many of the tenets of modern planners. Rossi's mission, as he later describes it, is nothing less than a search for the "fixed laws of a timeless typology."¹⁴

The specific focus of Rossi's book is the European city, the city defined by its architectonic elements or cultural physiognomy. Such an emphasis leads to an exposition of critical terms endowing each city with its lived "consciousness" – notions such as artifacts, permanences, monuments, memory, and locus. Collectively, they are the primary elements of a city that allow it to persist over time and are the source of ritual and the city's collective memory. The notion of typology is also central to Rossi's argument. In this regard he follows the lead of the neoclassicist Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, who had defined "type" as "not so much the image of a thing to be copied or perfectly imitated as the idea of an element that must itself serve as a rule for the model."¹⁵ For Rossi the need to return to these timeless urban types becomes his leading argument – both as an alternative to practices of design inspired by the Athens Charter and to his critique of "naive functionalism." Advocates of the latter view, Rossi argues, divest architectural form of its autonomous value by reducing design to a programmatic scheme of organization and circulation, a practice that Rossi likens (invoking Max Weber) to a commercialization of urban design. The idea of a traditional type, by contrast, allows historical considerations back into architecture, for it is that which (in its recovery of such things as cultural monuments) is both vital and closest to architecture's "essence." And even though Rossi does not explicitly make a case for recalling pre-industrial or eighteenth-century urban design strategies and forms, the suggestion is at least implied and will be developed by others.

In the same year in which *L'architettura della città* appeared, Rossi was teaming with Giorgio Grassi to produce the competition design for San Rocco Housing in Monza, the first of his larger typological schemes. Grassi also followed upon Rossi's effort in 1967 with his book *La costruzione logica dell'architettura* (The logical construction of architecture). It too aspired to be a "genealogy of rationalism," that is, "a scientific study of architecture and the classification of its elements" on a "rational and transmittable basis."¹⁶ Grassi took his idea of a typological manual back to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century handbooks of Pierre Le Muet, Charles-Etienne Briseux, and Roland Fréart de Chambray, but his formal explorations

lay closer to the housing and urban typologies of Heinrich Tessenow, Ludwig Hilberseimer, and Alexander Klein – early modernists whose work was little known at this time. These efforts by Rossi and Grassi were undertaken with the aim of imposing on architecture a “stabilization” of its formal types. Thus, by 1967 a basis had been laid for a new direction for Italian theory, and what remained was simply to give this foundation – from a critical perspective – a precise political calibration. The year 1968 provided the perfect occasion and the medium was Manfredo Tafuri, who, at the start of the year, had moved to Venice to take the chair at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (the IAUUV), the city’s architectural school.¹⁷ Within a few years he would forge a Milan–Venice axis with Rossi.

Tafuri arrived in Venice amid a highly charged political atmosphere. In the winter and spring of 1968 the architecture school was being occupied by students, who were denying the faculty (including Tafuri) entry to the school. Massimo Cacciari, Francesco Dal Co, and Cesare De Michelis had recently formed the critical journal *Angelus Novus*, which was exploring the writings of the Frankfurt School as well as the socialist architecture of the 1920s. Cacciari and Dal Co were also involved with *Contropiano*, a Marxist journal that was challenging the institutional structure of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) from a position on the left. The staff of *Contropiano* included the well known activists Alberto Asor Rosa, Mario Tronti, and Antonio Negri – the last two of whom were at that moment engaged in a furious debate over tactics.¹⁸

Tafuri brought with him his first critical study of contemporary architecture. In its understated but transparent political tone, *Teorie e storia dell’architettura* (Theories and history of architecture) today seems to situate itself between the revolutionary theories of Georg Lukács and the analytic detachment of Walter Benjamin. Indeed, one of the book’s intentions was to draw a parallel between the political situation of the 1920s and contemporary thought. The leitmotif for Tafuri is the term “operative criticism,” a concept that refers to those critics who read history as an explanation of more recent trends – that is, those who cull and misread the past through the use of convenient ideological judgments serving the present. The word “ideology” is also laden with political import. The Marxist term signifies the false “class consciousness” of the bourgeoisie (religious, cultural, aesthetic) that prevents the proletariat from attaining true consciousness of its revolutionary potential. Tafuri’s contention, in essence, is that the books of many modern histories had been cooked, because, in short, the architects of the 1920s had failed in their revolutionary ambitions.

Tafuri supports this contention with his notion of instrumentality: how criticism has since become a tool for ideological or false theorizing.

In surveying recent architecture theory, from Peter Collins to Aymonino, he finds the persistent desire of many to impose more scientific methods of analysis through the application of such strategies as structuralism, semiology, and typological research. And whereas he admits such methods do actually hold out some promise, Tafuri is quick to dismiss the tacit bond between capitalism and the semantic gamesmanship of many modern-day writers (Venturi) who embrace historical notions like “ambiguity” in order to justify their own design preferences.¹⁹ Ultimately, Tafuri wants to affirm history’s autonomy or theoretical separation from contemporary practice, and calls for this to be done not only out of intellectual embarrassment over the distortions through which so many historians have interpreted the past but also out of a sense of impotency in the face of capitalism’s advanced development. Today the historian’s role is not to explain away the crisis by resorting to the past, but actually to intensify or increase the current malaise. The historian must address the anguish of the present but of necessity with a note of intellectual despair. In later reminiscing on this period of the late 1960s, Tafuri invoked the paradigm of Francis Bacon’s *pars destruens* – the “negative part” of the inductive process that seeks to liberate the mind from errors.²⁰

As Tafuri settled into Venice, his political views advanced. In 1969 he penned for *Contropiano* an essay entitled “Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology,” the first of four critical essays that he wrote for this journal. Here he brings the problem of architecture’s false consciousness into sharper political focus, because – in his “psychoanalysis” of the previous two centuries – he rejects the slightest possibility of modernist optimism or utopian salvation. The analysis begins with the eighteenth-century theorists Laugier and Giovanni Battista Piranesi, both of whom, Tafuri insists, set the current crisis in motion: the latter with his celebration of the “fragment” that displaced the baroque insistence on the whole. In Tafuri’s fast-paced chronology, the utopian projects of the nineteenth century also failed miserably, as this century exhibited only “the unrestrained exhibition of a false conscience that strives for final ethical redemption by displaying its own inauthenticity.”²¹ The twentieth century fared no better, and even the “heroic” resistance of the avant-garde movements of the 1920s receives little praise in Tafuri’s analysis. This is because whether the strategy was De Stijl’s programmatic control of artistic production or the Dadaists’ “violent insertion of the irrational,” the endgame was always the same. In a prescient remark that highlighted changing architectural perceptions, he argued that all efforts to resist the capitalist order were usurped or drafted into the service of secular capitalism, that is, “large industrial capital – makes architecture’s underlying ideology its own.”²²

What this travesty bodes for architecture in 1969 is obviously nothing good. If Tafuri in his dialectic does not go so far as to reiterate Hegel's insistence on the death of architecture, the *zeitgeist* of finality nevertheless still haunts the present, even for those political activists temporally buoyed by the illusion that they are enjoying a brief "moment in the class struggle." Kurt W. Forster perhaps best encapsulates the severity of Tafuri's indictment by noting "the fundamental impossibility of any meaningful cultural action within the historical confinement of the present."²³ This is the case, Tafuri argues, as much for the "polyvalent images" of Venturi as it is for the "silence of geometries" of Rossi. Architecture, barring the unlikely revolution, is now stripped of its revolutionary appeal.

In 1973 Tafuri expanded this essay into his popular book *Progetto e utopia*, translated into English as *Architecture and Utopia*. He now fortifies his Rorschach method of analysis with the sociological theories of Weber, Benjamin, and Karl Mannheim, as well as the "negative thought" of his friend Massimo Cacciari. In this new and depressing light, Dada's "desacralization of values," or Benjamin's "end of the aura," can no longer be seen as irrational processes because their "destruction of values offered a wholly new type of rationality, which was capable of coming face to face with the negative, in order to make the negative itself the release valve of an unlimited potential for development."²⁴ The two design strategies that he sees currently unfolding – semiology and compositional formalism – both fall under "capital's complete domination" and are doomed in a revolutionary sense. If semiology's search for symbolism is simply an acknowledgment that architecture has already lost its meaning, the formalist approach of architects like the "New York Five" is similarly fated to be consumed by the market forces of commercialization. The architect and critic have but one role to play, which is "to do away with impotent and ineffectual myths, which so often serve as illusions that permit the survival of anachronistic 'hopes of design.'"²⁵ Architecture, even more ruthlessly than Venturi had suggested, is thereby shorn of any and all meliorist intentions.

The Milan Triennale

From such a starkly nihilist perspective, it is clear that Venturi and Scott Brown's populist embrace of Las Vegas could not be interpreted by Tafuri as anything other than a capitulation to capitalist forces, but within a few years Tafuri's censure of Rossi would become tempered. In 1969 Aymonino invited Rossi to design his first major building, the Gallarate, a housing complex outside Milan. Rossi responded with a type of "corridor



Figure 1.2 Aldo Rossi, Gallarate, Milan, Italy. Image courtesy of Alessandro Frigerio.

housing” displaying extreme prismatic rigor: two buildings supported on narrow fins running sequentially 182 meters in length, narrowly gapped, and fitted with squared window openings. Whereas Tafuri at first seems to have been taken back by Rossi’s De Chiricoesque inspiration – “frozen in spaces abandoned by time” – he later nearly praised “the sacred precision of his geometric block” for remaining “above ideology and above all utopian proposals for a ‘new lifestyle.’”²⁶ Rossi’s selfless sacrifice, better yet, abandonment, was, of course, exceeded by the architect’s otherworldly yet much applauded primitive typology for the expansion of the San Cataldo Cemetery in Modena, the first designs for which appeared in 1971. Here the primeval silence of the forms seems entirely appropriate for people who, in the words of Rafael Moneo, “no longer need protection from the cold.”²⁷

Rossi, in fact, was able to offer an explanation for such designs when he was named architectural curator of 15th Triennale of Milan, which took place in 1973. The exhibition was an architectural extravaganza that made the reputations of many young designers, and in retrospect the most important event was the exhibition catalogue itself, *Architettura razionale*

(Rational architecture), which would now serve as a manifesto for a new movement. Rossi opened the polemic by championing typology and rationalism not as some vague response to the complex problems of today, but rather as “a more concrete way of working.”²⁸ Another section of the catalogue featured excerpts from the writings of Ernesto Rogers, J. J. P. Oud, Adolf Loos, J. A. Ginzburg, Giorgio Grassi, and Hans Schmidt – all to buffer the case for a latter-day typology taking its inspiration in part from the spirit of the 1920s. The heart of the catalog, however, was Massimo Scolari’s essay, “Avanguardia e nuova architettura (Avant-garde and new architecture), which sought to position historically the new rationalist movement, now to be known as *La Tendenza* (the trend).

Scolari traced this new “critical attitude” to the urban debates of the 1960s in Italy as well as to the circle of architects involved with *Casabella-continuità* and the Milan Polytechnic, which included Rossi, Ernesto Rogers, and Vittorio Gregotti. If Rossi’s book of 1966 becomes the defining moment for *La Tendenza*, the political events of 1968 brought the issues into sharper focus. Tafuri’s anti-utopian insistence on architectural autonomy, for example, allows him to be seen as “one of the most passionate ‘planners’ of the *Tendenza*.”²⁹ Similarly, Rossi’s typological “process of essentialization” defines the pivotal point at which both the neo-avant-garde’s denial of disciplinary discourse and architecture’s “bourgeois” contamination are overcome by a “*global refounding of architecture*.”³⁰ This is true because Rossi’s “rigid world with few objects,” like the historiography of Tafuri, no longer allows the possibility of advanced technological thinking, and indeed the architect now must be selective in turning to any recent modernist sources. Through such an ideological backdoor enter such seemingly inexplicable works as East Germany’s “New City” at Halle and East Berlin’s Karl-Marx-Allee – planning types now approved for contemporary appropriation, presumably for reasons of their political coloration alone. More generally, *La Tendenza* becomes defined by its strict ties to historical types (not specific forms), its focus on the city, its urban morphology, its monumentality, and indeed by the way it values prototypical or Platonic form.³¹

If the neoclassical architect Etienne-Louis Boullée would have concurred whole-heartedly with such sentiments, not all critics in the early 1970s were willing to go so far down the path of rationalist austerity. The historian Joseph Rykwert, someone who had long-standing ties to Italian architectural circles, provided one of the few stinging retorts to Rossi’s and Scolari’s contentions: “So that’s it, then. Architecture may stay alive as long as she stays dumb. Dumb and beautiful maybe, but dumb. Those of us who refuse this condition are sternly set aside.”³²