The philosophical journey began in Edmund Husserl’s (1859–1938) quest for a phenomenological origin of the sciences, of our experience of ourselves, and of the world, is still underway. His synthesis anniversary might be taken as an opportu-nity to pause and reflect upon the divided trajectories that have characterized the philosophical geography of the last century: the split between analytic and Continental thought, but also the interior rifts and conflicts that have come to mark the latter, this nebulous entity known as “Continental philosophy.”

It is often said that phenomenology, especially in its post-Husserlian variants, has a certain affinity with aesthetic experience, and that the concept of time itself could be affirmed as the new cultural form of the Metropolis. For Rixt Hoekstra, we must separate the program of research initiated by Tafuri from the context of 1960s and ‘70s Italian politics—and it is clear that the question of the ideological role played by architecture and the negative logic of the “metropolis” is very much alive today, as can be seen in the writings and projects of someone like Rem Koolhaas. Peter Zumthor’s essay addresses the historical context as well, but it does so in order to show that the thesis of a “death of architecture” often ascribed to Tafuri appears rather different when seen in the light of his analysis of “intellectual work.” Andrew Leach, finally, asks the question of the historian’s own practice, and questions the “critical” and the “operative,” especially in view of Tafuri’s sustained reflection on the tools of historiography itself, and suggests that this is what constitutes the most productive as well as the most problematic part in his legacy.

The Venice School, and in particular the work of Manfredo Tafuri, which is at the core of Nicholas Smith’s essay, is often ascribed to Tafuri appears rather different when seen in the light of his analysis of “intellectual work.” Andrew Leach, finally, asks the question of the historian’s own practice, and questions the “critical” and the “operative,” especially in view of Tafuri’s sustained reflection on the tools of historiography itself, and suggests that this is what constitutes the most productive as well as the most problematic part in his legacy.

The editors
Letter to Hofmannsthal

Edmund Husserl

Göttingen, January 12th, 1907

Dear Herr von Hofmannsthal,

You have told me how difficult life is for you because of a constantly swirling flood of letters. But since you granted me with such an exquisite gift, I must thank you nonetheless. You have to bear the consequences of the evil deed, and allow yet another letter to wash over you. I must also deeply apologize for not thanking you right away. Long sought-after syntheses of thought suddenly presented themselves, as if dropped from the heavens. A considerable amount of work was required to quickly provide them with a stable form. Your “short” lectures, which were constantly by my side, were a great source of inspiration, even though it was only able to read certain parts here and there.

For me, the “inner states” that are portrayed in your art as purely aesthetic, or not exactly portrayed, but elevated into a sphere of pure aesthetic beauty, these states hold, in this aesthetic objectification, a particular interest—i.e. not only for the art lover in me, but also for the philosopher and “phenomenology”. For many years I have attempted to get a clear sense of the basic problems of philosophy, and then of the methods for solving them, all of which led me to the “phenomenological” method as a permanent acquisition. It demands an attitude towards all forms of objectivity that fundamentally departs from its “natural” counterpart, and which is closely related to the attitude and stance in which your art, as something purely aesthetic, places us with respect to the presented stance in which your art, as something purely aesthetic, places us with respect to the presented.

As soon as the sphinx of knowledge has posed its question, as soon as we have looked into the abyssal depths of the possibility of a knowledge that would be enacted in subjective experiences and yet contain an in-itself existing objectivity, our attitude to all pre-given knowledge and all pre-given—being of all science and all assumed reality—has become a radically different one. Everything questionable, everything incomprehensible, everything enigmatic! The enigma can only be solved if we place ourselves on its own ground and treat all knowledge as questionable, and accept no existence as pre-given. That means that all science and all reality (including the reality of one’s own) have become mere “phenomena.” Only one thing remains to clarifies in a purely intuiting (in a purely intuiting fashion), which is closely related to the attitude and stance in which your art, as something purely aesthetic, places us with respect to the presented.

But happily enough, part of the philosophical “essence” of a lecture is the absence of a demand for an answer, and the same thing holds for the essence of “academic freedom,” that one can fall asleep or skip school as much as one wants. But I wish you all the best, dear H, in the new year. And what I wish you, I wish the entire world of people who take such a great interest in your inner development and growth, with its blossoms and flowerings.

Yours truly

With best regards, from all of us to all of you

Ed. Husserl

References

1. Hoffmansthal visited Husserl on December 6, 1906, which was in Göttingen to give a lecture at the invitation of Theodor Lysing.
2. Presumably Hofmannsthal’s Krise Dienen (1904). This work has not been found in Husserl’s library.
3. I am leaning on the splendid domain of the philosophical critique of “practical” and “aesthetic,” in general evaluating “senses.” (Husserl’s unshuffled texts.)
Phenomenology and the Possibility of a Pure Art: Husserl’s Letter to Hofmannsthal

Sven-Olov Wallenstein

I. Aesthetics and Art in the phenomenological tradition

Within the first decades of phenomenological German Idealism, there emerged two main responses to a question that had already been brushed in German Idealism: what is the significance of art and aesthetics for philosophy? Do works of art constitute yet another object of study that can be safely circumscribed and eventually endowed with a limited “autonomy”, or do they point toward a dimension that exceeds the grasp of philosophy, and exceeds it not merely as an external factor, but as something more intimate than subjective interiority itself, something that would be inextricably bound up with the very possibility of thought?

The first and more restricted response, which focuses on a priori or eidetic conditions of the aesthetic object, was the one that took precedence among those philosophers that remained within the orbit of Husserl’s initial proposals. The second and more provocative response, which to a large extent draws on Heidegger’s rejection of the concept of aesthetics in the 1920s, belongs to a later phase, where the “event” of the work demands of thought that enrich its own concepts, and ultimately aspires to transform the discourse of philosophy itself. That this was a historical register of the question was, within the first type of response, largely unconscious—or at least not an explicit focus. But it became increasingly important in the second response, since this turned out to be a history that would take us back not only to idealism, but even, as if in a series of ever widening circles, to Plato and a certain retaking of the “ancient quarrel”, the páthos diaphora, staged in the Republic, where poetry appears as the rival of philosophy.

This decisive presence of questions of art and aesthetics—both in the restricted and the general sense—in the phenomenological tradition, especially as it is developed into various existential, hermeneutic, and deconstructive phases, always subordinated to the more general issues addressed as a living question. Many of these passages can be found in the volume Phänomenologie der Erlebniswelten (1931) where Husserl, in his attempts to grasp the phenomenological essence of phantasy and image consciousness, often draws on artistic examples; then there is an important section in the volume on the phenomenological reduction (which assembles manuscripts from 1916 to 1935), where Husserl brings out the priority of reduction to art, but also attempts to define a line of demarcation between them; and finally, there is the brief, dense, even enigmatic letter to Hugo von Hofmannsthal (translated here), written in 1907, the year after the idea of the cyclique was beginning to take form, and which thus occupies an absolutely crucial place in the chronology of Husserl’s development.

Husserl’s apparent lack of interest in the topic is undoubtedly due to the general direction of his philosophy as it emerges in the Essay: regardless of how we may finally assess the influence of Frege’s criticism of the earlier work on the philosophy of arithmetic, the move away from psychology was part of an attempt to provide a secure foundation for the mathematical and logical disciplines, as well as for the natural sciences, and even though the question of the foundations of the human and social sciences was always there, it was never the focal point of Husserl’s research.

The excursions into the domain of aesthetics that we find in Husserl’s research from the Interim (1913) to the Phänomenologie der Erlebniswelten (1931) illustrate the difficulty of the project, which all in various ways dealt with the question head-on. Many of these passages can be found in the volume Phänomenologie der Erlebniswelten (1931), where Husserl, in his attempts to define the various modes of “representation” (Vorstellung) as opposed to direct perception or “presentation” (Inhalt) to saturate the experiences we have of paintings, sculptures, photographs, theater performances etc., even of the newly born art form of cinema (cf. p. 56f.), —experiences which often appear as paradigmatic for the whole domain under investigation. Phantasy furthermore presents a particularly complex problem in transporting us into a world of its own, and although Husserl initially thought that phantasy could be analyzed as a particular “neutralization” of a previous position of actuality, he eventually gave up this two-step view, which in fact makes the structure of phantasy, or an originally non-perspectival art, even more difficult and enigmatic, but also more decisive. Phantasy in fact plays a crucial role in phenomenology, since the technique of “phantasy variation” is what opens up the whole domain of essences—it is the “vital element” of phenomenology, Husserl says in another context (cf. Antiphon § 75).

In many of his descriptions, Husserl appears to be retrieving the Kantian vocabulary of imagination and beauty in the third Critique, for instance when he determines phantasy as the domain of “disinterestedness” (Entbehrlichkeit), “purposelessness,” and “play” (Kosmetik). Another echo of Kant, this time with respect to the his analysis of reflexive judgment and feeling, can be overheard when Husserl emphasizes that we can indeed pass judgments on phantasied objects, just as we can feel tendencies towards them, although in a “pure” mode that separates such acts from those that are based on perception (from determining judgments and acts that involve interest, as Kant would say). Phantasy is characterized by freedom, at the limit even an “unconditioned arbitrariness”, which is an indication of its subjective character, as well as of its opposition to the normal perceptual world. This subjective nature does not preclude the phantasied object having a certain identity, although Husserl’s understanding of this was shifting: sometimes he understood this object as something “possible,” but in the end he abandoned the theory of phantasy as a modification of a priori possessing of existence. Phantasy constitutes an object of its own, and the many conceptual shifts and displacements...
in drawing on these phenomena to Suprematism and onwards, starts (46/50). The gambit of modernist painting, from in principle, although it “has no existence at
image sets up a complex dialectic: the canvas as “suppression” of the necessary materiality of the
guishes it from a symbol or a sign. The dialectic (Bismarck, the Madonna) appear, and distin-
“seeing-in” makes the subject of the image
we see in image consciousness is, rigorously
Fiktum “figment” (Schein by an “image object” that Husserl describes as a
here between materiality and ideality, mediated
be free, as Kant would say, and it cannot be
compelled by any concept, either theoretical or
 directional.

phantasy as an originary and irreducible mode of
thought. The more the “the
phantasy as an originary and irreducible mode of
thought. The more the “the

as any political “tendency”. The more the “the
principles of mind (1925), as well
Reizenstein, Nicht- und ja nach dem
in the letter to Husserl, points towards the true method that
Husserl believes he has just uncovered, just as

In the letter to Hofmannsthall, Husserl points directly to the proximity of the artist to that of the
philosopher.

This foundation, however, first appears as al-
most wholly foreign to the fundamental recess-
civism in the Cartesian sense, and more as an intense experience than that of “the everyday
convictions are slipping away” in the “abyssal
depths” opened up by the psyche, we must say “Everything is questionable, everything incom-
prehensible, everything enigmatic!” in order to
solve this mystery, we need to place ourselves “on
its own ground”, which itself at first appear-
pears as a certain groundlessness that demands of us that “we treat all knowledge as question-
able, and accept no existence as pre-given.”

Phenomenological imaging is in this sense closely allied with aesthetic imaging as the pos-
sibility of a presuppositionless research—carried
out in “as it were” aesthetic fashion, Husserl says—even though a certain epistemic
equality in the end determines this relation: aesthetic
intuiting, in a suspension of all forms of positing
of value and existence that liberates the imagina-
tion, provides a key to what phenomenological
intuiting might mean, although in the final
instance the latter is always called upon to find
the former as one of its regional modalities.

The task of the artist is therefore, Husserl con-
ccludes: he must be a genius (once more a Kantian
echo unlike science, art need not account for all of its
steps and procedures, and it does not at
tempt to grasp the world in concepts); he follows
his own desire; and he observes the world in a
“purely aesthetic and phenomenological fash-
ion”. Together, this demon and this capacity for
observation, Husserl suggests, lead to an “intuit-
ing-blind production” (akzentuierender Wirkprozess) of
the idea of a pure art and a pure phenomenol-
ogy in this way remain closely tied together, and
the first wave of abstraction that emerged at the
same time Husserl wrote his letter was one way to
articulate this connection. Others would fol-
low, opposing themselves to a certain modernist
“purity” by, often unwittingly, drawing on other as-
pects of the phenomenological heritage, most not-
ably temporality and kinaesthesia. The story of
these highly complex exchanges remains to be
written. *

Notes
1 Werner Hugonitz, Die phänomenologische Ästhetik (Berlin: Arndt Collignon, 1948), the early history of
phenomenological aesthetics is still relatively unex-
plored, for two works that survey this development,
see Gabriele Ginzburg, Die eignen Entdeckungen (Munich: Fink, 1994), and George Bensch, Dem
kenntner
2 It is undoubtedly true that, for a long time, a certain type of modernist reaction in painting, from the
most sophisticated to the most naïve, could draw on an implicit phenomenological premise, i.e., that
painting could serve as a parable for a return to an original sense of space and sensibility that would
provide technological mediation, and thus once and for all destroy the fear in other media. The
French painter Robert Walden, writing in his book on the “Work in painting” (Robert Walden constanti-
ately and methodically histogrammatised his encounters as a “first word”); cf. Maria Pfeiffer, La tête de
Cézanne, in Cézanne, in its various forms (Paris: Garnier, 1947). The subsequent development of French
abstract, phenomenologically inspired art is a paradigmatic instance of such a “first word” and onward,
draws on the same legacy, is Elton Knowles Turner, L’œil d’un peintre (Paris: Points, 1997), a poeti-
cized reading of Cézanne’s last works, read in terms of the “figural” and the “architectural”.
3 As we have noted, these discussions always in-
clide the proximity of the activity of the artist to that of the
philosopher. He begins by
excusing himself for not having written earlier,
suggesting that an important breakthrough is
the reason for the delay: “Long sought-after
syntheses of thought suddenly presented them-

selves,” he writes, “as if dropped from the heav-
en”—which may be taken as a reference to the
whole complex of the psyche, which had begun to
dawn on him in spirit. These syntheses now
appear to be closely connected to those “inner
states” that Husserl finds in Hofmannsthall, and
they point towards the true method that
Husserl believes he has just uncovered, just as

art, phenomenology must depart from all
“natural” and “existential” attitudes (i.e., those
that assume certain things as simply there and
existing, and are modes of “actual” life and
consciousness). Art must exclude all influences
from the intellect and the will. Here too we may
recognize certain features from Kant: pure aeth-
thetic judgments must suspend, if not entirely,
under, the relations to the faculties of knowledge and
desire (a connection that Husserl himself
makes in Husserliana, ed. Eduard Marbach in
Hua Hua X, xv, and by Eduard Marbach in
Hua XXIII, cf. 145/168 note), as well as

Sens et non-sens (Paris: Nagel, 1948). In the subsequent
development of postwar French abstraction, phenom-
ological indeed served as a privileged interpretive,
unmistakable example of which can be found in Heinz
Büsing’s Manifest (1951), which promised and withheld in his attempts to articulate a
“first word”; cf. Merleau-Ponty, “Le doute de Cézanne” ,

as any political “tendency”. The more the “the ph"phantasy as an originary and irreducible mode of
thought. The more the “the

as any political “tendency”. The more the “the
El en effet, vous retrouverez toujours ce geste chez moi, pour lequel je n’ai pas de justification ultime, sauf que c’est moi, c’est où je suis. Je suis en guerre contre moi-même, c’est vrai, vous ne pouvez pas savoir à quel point, au-delà de ce que vous devinez, et je dis des choses contra-dictoires, qui sont, disons, en tension stille, et qui me constrainent, me font vivre, et me forcent mourir. Cette guerre, je la vois parfois comme cette guerre terrifiante et pénible, mais en même temps je sais que c’est la vie, je ne trouverai la paix que dans le repos étendu. Donc je ne peux pas dire que j’assume cette contradiction, mais je sais aussi qu’ici ce qui me laisse en vie, et me fait poser la question, justement, que vous rap- peliez, “comprendre vider”?

Jacques Derrida, Apprendre à vivre enfin entre les deux. Entretien avec Jean Birnbaum

La différence: beyond the French reception of Husserl

Even though Husserl’s thinking has received a remarkable amount of attention over the last decades, the full extent of many of its central as- pects still remains surprisingly unknown. It is in particular the development of genetic phenomenology that is at stake here, as it plunges ever deeper into “original constitution” ferreting out the structural relations between inner time-consciousness, affectivity and intersubjectivity, while at the same time never giving up static phenomenology and a certain prioritizing of Cartesian subjectivity. To take just one example, Derrida, who spent his formative first fifteen years (between 1953 and 1967) studying Husserl’s oeuvre with exceptional philosophical creativity and rigour, returns to Husserl’s analysis of the lived body and the intention Untergrund of reason from late-31 (a theme left conspicuously absent in his major works on Husserl) in one of his last central texts to be published before his death Le tochter, Jean-Luc Nancy. In Derrida’s development, the analysis of Husserl gradually became filtered through the optics of Heidegger’s destruction of ontology. Husserlian phenomenology thereby came to be seen as the pinnacle of a metaphysics of presence, which founded the entire history of western metaphysics. Husserl’s philosophy celebrated a consciousness that addresses itself through the voice of inner thought, in the fullness of the “living present” as its temporal, constitutive foundation. Against this, Derrida argued repeatedly that the desire for presence, which in the Platonic sense was a desire for the Good (Kr. VIII), is a desire for that which cannot be had since presence is always divided. If fulfilled, such a desire for the Good would lead to death: pure theoretic vision obliterating all sensible life. Self-presence for Derrida is in fact always divided, always split and this is what deconstruction set out to demonstrate. But since Derrida’s late reading of Husserl has yet to leak out of texts that he worked with in the 1980s, it will never reach the level of interpreta- tion that is increasingly being called for today. That being said, it is at the same time clear that many of the themes that are only now becoming visible in Husserl’s texts owe much to the patient and inventive interpretative work that Derrida performed, together with Merleau-Ponty and Levinas. The most innovative aspects of their work with respect to Husserl were often present- ed as decisive steps “beyond” (which the earnest reader soon learned to recognize as follow- ing upon the magical à-dire “au-delà des analyses husserliennes, il faut monter que . . ., m.b.”) and if it turns out that important parts of these innova- tions are already to be found within Husserl’s thinking (which more and more seems to be the case), then his philosophy must be reconsidered from this new vantage point. At least such a sce- nario suggests that the borders of transcendental phenomenology be pushed forward, and the limitations that have become associated with it be opened up for scrutiny again. That would also be the only way to respect the interpretative work that his most demanding and creative dis- ciples have undertaken, thereby contributing to the liberation and fuller understanding of their own work as well.

One such topic that suggests itself in this context is that of difference, in all of its rich, me- andering variations in Merleau-Ponty, Levinas and Derrida (ent, tout originaire, et différer dont l’identité, Différence et originaire et even dif.ence, all three worked on these themes during the 1940s and 1960s, in explicit and close connection with Husserl’s analyses of time in its relation to sensuous, bodily affliation. In the case of Derrida, more specifically, it was the structure of Husserl’s extended now consisting of a “now”-point that is inseparable tied to a creation that opens it onto the immediate past and a protention that opens it toward the coming that brought on his crisis. There is no room in Husserl’s model in account of the original contamination of the now, since despite its break with traditional

... why Husserl? ... (Husserl is more contemporary than time itself) ...

(time itself) ...

Nicholas Smith

11. The radicalized reduction to the “streaming living present”

Husserl devoted many important manuscripts to the closer determination of the structure of the streaming living present in the early 1930s. It is immediately clear that we are not dealing with anything like a solipsistic closure closed upon itself, as if Husserl’s late philosophy was based on the foundation of a solid subjectual core. What we do find is prerequisites that enable the ceaselessly ongoing self-transcending move- ment in relation both to myself, the world and the other, kept at bay and in relative, yet fragile, stability due to the uninterrupted passive syn- theses at work. One of the main features of the last, so-called C-manuscripts on the constitution of time from the 1930s, in comparison to the 1905 lectures and the 1917–8 texts on inner-time-consciousness, is that the predominantly formal aspects of the latter give way to a decisively more “concrete” analysis, which stems from the inves- tigation of transcendental time that was under- taken in the meantime. This is clearly reflected in the central concept of lebensgegenwart, which is analyzed from various angles in virtually all the C-manuscripts. When Husserl refers to the expression lebensgegenwart in earlier texts, it does not yet have the particular connotations that were first developed in connection precisely with the “radicalized reduction” in March, 1930. This enables Husserl to investigate the con- stitution of time as pertaining to the “I” more thoroughly in the C-manuscripts, and from this “self-transcending” source a living streaming present to further account for all the layers of constitution ending with communally constitu- ted objective time.

For the reduction as presented in his earlier texts leads to a nontoxic-stream of ex- periences, whereas the “radicalized reduction” themedized in C-5 from 1930, which leads to the “streaming-living present”, shows us that the representation of consciousness as such a stream is merely a necessary yet naive pre-stage. This stream is itself constituted and the proper transcendental reduction is now to disclose the source of this constitution. The blockage into the genetic sources of our world-appearance thus gains a new focus by revealing yet another pre- judgment that clouds our self-understanding. This leads to the sphere of Урадетаж, of origi- nal temporization, which is but another name for the most fundamental process taking place in the living present: ... (why Husserl)

... (Husserl is more contemporary than time itself) ...

... (time itself) ...

... (why Husserl) ...
The reduction to the living present is the most radicalized reduction to the subjectivity in which the process of all becoming valid-for-me is originally completed, in which all being-meaning is meaning for me and experimentally given for me as a consciously valid meaning. It is the reduction to the sphere of originary temporization, in which the first and original source-like meaning of time appears—time precisely as living streaming present (XXXIV, Nr. 11 [C] 3/1930, 187).

After this new, radicalized reduction is performed, the view of consciousness as a stream of experiences is no longer valid, i.e., is shown to be a naive presupposition. With this new reduction, we are asked to give up a notion of ourselves that has not only been reached by demanding philosophical labor (i.e. the bulk of Husserl’s published work, except Crisis), but which is also deeply rooted in our everyday self-understanding. For once we bracket the validity of regarding ourselves in terms of our own life process, as my own sequential flow in which one experience is joined to another, we are left only with the very functioning “there” which gives these experiences. Like the absolute consciousness of the early lectures, this functioning center is not itself conscious of itself. For once I bracket the validity of regarding myself in terms of my own life process, as my own sequential flow in which one experience is joined to another, I realize that I am essentially subjected to a necessary fissure, so that I can only be called “I” if I am a truly radical philosophy. Thus the “I” that is enshrined in the “I” at the deepest genetic level first made possible by the radicalized reduction also to account for the givenness of the other. We have on one hand the alterity of me towards my own past and future, and on the other hand the alterity of me towards the other: what is the relation between these two kinds of alterity? Are they the same?

Intricacies of Subjectivity

Having spelled out some of the consequences of the radicalized reduction for Husserl’s analysis of egological subjectivity, we must now proceed to see whether or not it will also affect his analysis of intersubjectivity. The intersubjective reduction, first presented in the breakthrough 1929—30 lectures The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, offered a revolutionary possibility to present the transcendental field as being “extended” by means of my ability to so to speak “live myself into the other” in empathic acts. The structure of this was later more clearly expounded upon by appealing to the notion of “intentional implication.” But although all these analyses, there has never been any question of presenting the otherness of the other in ways that would move beyond her givenness for me as a retreacable from out of my present intentional situation. That is to say, the other always remains an alter ego that I could account for by means of my own intentionality, both active and passive, but never beyond what a genetic question would be able to come up with a belonging within my retrievable horizon. The question now is whether or not the radicalized reduction, which brings forth a hitherto-concealed genetically primal level of constitution, may disclose an intersubjective dimension that precedes this. There is a whole group of texts that attempt to work out this relation by means of a somewhat different approach, where the static position of an ego standing over against another ego is further genetized. This final position will be investigated in two steps, first in relation to the radicalized reduction that
that it allows for a greater freedom of manifesta-

the Cartesian dualism that still stands in the way
say a “self-recollection of the other (Miterinnerung
other in the originary empathy is now described
recollection and the other undergoes a shift in
as “appresented” by me. This means that the
ition in comparison to the thought of the other

direction of a genetic constitutive
of his most interesting late analyses that inves-
it—be shown to be intersubjective. The step that
have raised objections to this

Miterinnerung

rethought in terms of the living streaming
is presently being analyzed, and second in rela-
tion to the universal reduction.

In the “concrete living present” understood from the radicalized reduction that was intro-
duced earlier in on C, Husserl in this highly
important text (which is to some extent unpre-
cedented in at least his transcendental philosophy, although there are important references to Ger-
man idealism here) begins to draw out the real
implications that are opened by means of this
reduction. There, he says, we find every other
ego that is transcendently streaming present
being, constituted in me as streaming co-present
(integtrungert mit) subjectivity, which itself is
correction; streaming living concrete present: “the
other is co-present in me” (Fünf, § 86). This
analysis of Mitgegenwärtigkeit will be used to stretch
the Cartesian dualism that still stands in the way
of a more genuine grasp of intersubjectivity, in
that it allows for a greater freedom of manifesta-

tion in comparison to the thought of the other
as “represented” by me. This means that the

say a “self-recollection of the other (Mitgegenwär-
ten der Anderen, ibid, § 437). At the opening of this
analysis, Husserl is once more careful to stress
that the identity of the self is reasserted by means
of reflection, stating that the “I” as ego-pole is
abstract as long as the contents of the streaming
living present are not taken into account: this
alone makes it “concrete”. This identity will be
subjected to quite severe pressure in the remain-
der of this seminal text, now that the “I”
has been reframed in terms of the living streaming
present, and the full force of the streaming as
pre-egocentric will be shown to also include the other, so
that the transcendental field will—at the lim-
ith be shown to be intersubjective. The step that
Husserl takes here is the starting point of many
of his most interesting late analyses that inves-
tigate this deepening of static egoity in the
direction of a genetic constitutive intersubjectivity
that is originally streaming being. Obviously
many interpreters have raised objections to this
step, claiming that this is “unphilosophical” (Landgrebe, Zahavi, Hart), that Husserl has here
crossed the most fundamental line for the very
idea of transcendental phenomenology. Many
more simply overlook it, as if it wasn’t there,
but as this represents the outcome of Husserl’s
transcendental genetic Erkennen, it cannot be
dismissed without proper argumentation. Start-
ing out from a philosophical enterprise mainly
set upon classifying epistemological issues,
Husserl, by following what at heart remains the
same basic reducive methodology, is led to a
decentering of the very same ego that was to do
the clarification. This however should in no way
be conceived of as the abandonment of egoity,
not a questioning of its validity: the egological
starting point remains as ever our sole access to
transcendental phenomenological inquiry. But
this very inquiry also brings us to the experience
of its limits, and the experience that in the order
of constitution there is a genetically deeper layer
that is ego epistemiological and that in this sense pre-
cedes the “I”. How can we ever hope to find a way
to combine these two perspectives, the epologi-
cal as essentially first for every transcendental
knowledge and the intersubjective as essentially
first in some other sense? I think the key to
understanding this seeming paradox lies in the dif-
ferentiation that Husserl so often falls back upon
between an order of knowledge and an order of
being. As epistemology becomes radical phenomen-
ology, it starts to critically examine its own
presuppositions and finds not only that there is
a hidden transcendental “I” that constitutes the
world, but furthermore that this transcendental
“I" itself rests on concealed presuppositions
that the reducive experience as actually starts to
reveal. Intersubjectivity represents the “order of
being”, the ego-closed or the prototypical “I”,
but this can only be known and made explicit
from an epistemological point of view that realizes
the ego-closedness, the protos person as.
Spea-
ing of the universal reduction towards the end
of the Crisis, Husserl says that it is only with the
utmost difficulty that one can begin to grasp it as
something else than a universality of individual
reductions.

How could it be possible otherwise? Human
 beings are external to one another, they are
separated realities, and so their psychic inte-
rions are also separated. Internal psychology

can thus only individual psychology of
 individual soul [...] . All this appears perfec-
tively obvious. Thus one will take it as a gross
exaggeration, in part as an absurdity, if I say
in advance that the properly understood
epochs, with its properly understood univers-
ality, totally changes all the notions that
one could ever have of the task of psychol-
gey, and it reveals everything that was just
put forward as obvious to be a naiveté which
necessarily and forever becomes impossible
as soon as the epoch and the reduction
are actually, and in their full sense, understood
and carried out (Gruss, § 74, 742).

So it is only by bringing out the temporal foun-
dation as presented in the C-manuscripts that
Husserl’s many investigations of constitutive
intersubjectivity in his other late texts can ul-

M-direction

M(t₀+int₂)

M(t₀+int₁)

M(t₀)
refuses to go along with the generic deepening of the static ego—alter ego position that Husserl maintains in the Cartesian Meditations. It is only towards the very end of Crisis that we find a rigorous account of the base ends that will be ensnared up here, which will enable us to bring to this discussion of the generational of monadology to a preliminary end. Having established the necessity to open up the level of Ur-Ich as a bridge between the “ontological” and the “psychological ways” by means of a (non-explicit) radicalized reduction, Husserl brings to a halt the preliminary investigation of life-worldly intersubjectivity. The reason for this is to further investigate the genetically-transcendental status of the communalization (Vergemeinschaftung) and temporization (Zeitigung) that were reached in a preliminary fashion earlier on §§ 47, 50). It is therefore in a sense the very process by which the life world must come to understand (sic) that it is at stake, and for this it can only rely on its singular participants. From the position of the “unique sort of philosophical solide” (eigentüm- liches philosophisches Einzelns) — which is not the mere “unnaturalness” that the first reduction disclosed but its generic deepening — Husserl begins the complex movement that will lead to at once a radical decentering of the ego, and to its unquestioned validity. The whole differentiation and order of the personal pronouns is at this stage rendered invalid, and yet the 1-63 is something that can never lose its “uniqueness and personal indecidability”.

It is only an apparent contradiction to this that the ego—[as] makes itself declarable, for itself, transcendentally; that, starting from itself and in itself, it constitutes transcen- dental intersubjectivity, to which it then adds itself as a merely privileged member, namely, as “I” among the transcendental others. This is what philosophical self- exposition [Selbstaufschreibung] in the epoché actually teaches us (CrI, § 54, 185).

In order to show that the contradiction is indeed only “apparent”, which is the problem that has kept the interpretation moving back and forth, Husserl in a high-density formulation brings into play the two-sided process of “de- representification” (Ent-repräsentieren) and “self-alienation” (Ent-Fremdung) that was just mentioned. The problem of the individualization of the “intersubjective streaming being” that characterizes the monadic totality here finds its solution, by means of a ceaselessly ongoing and self-aliening duplicity that accounts for my pre-identity at the deepest genetic level. The self-presence that characterizes the transcendental “I” at the level of streaming living present thus ultimately consists of two different modes of self-alienation, which it is its very movement being about this “self”. It is thus not a question of a fixed and stable unit that is stored to life from out of its eternal slumber in passivity, but a “self” that is constituted through these “uncon- scious” movements away from itself. It manifests itself as a dual movement away from “itself”, the “self” gaining contour only by the traces that these two motion leave behind as constantly shifting sedimentation, with the arrival of every new phyteus material that by means of temporiza- tion provides material for the pre-constitution, and from which eventually lived experiences are constituted. Ent-Gegenwärtigung here accounts for our temporal projects, and although Husserl here only mentions the past (to explicate the analogy between the givenness of my past and the other), its scope must be extended to the future as well. Unlike retention, the emphasis is now on the self-transcending movement than on the living-on of temporal objects. Its task is not to assure that the objects are not lost as soon as the new has brought another phase of the object into presence, but to account for the deepest pre-ecological structuring. This means that the aspect of non-presence that retentional and protentional intentionality brought with them is now reinforced, bringing out the foreignness that inheres in memories and expecta- tions, and confronting them with their own limits: oblivion and death. Ent-Fremdung, on the other hand, is more immediately foreign since it involves not my own self-alienation but the alienation of the other. Beneath empathy, and making it possible for the “I” at higher levels of constitu- tion to intend the other empathically, there is a constant process wherein the Ur-Ich (which is prior to all differences between “I” and “we”), by moving away from itself in the direction of the other, thereby produces itself. To speak of “self- alienation” as care does in the English transla- tion, is therefore incorrect to the extent that it encourages one to hold on to the illusory notion of a “self” that only afterwards and by accident encounters alienating tendencies—for in Ent-Fremdung there is no self-host, only movement away and a strange, passive process (since there is no “I” of alienation. In between these two intimately connected movements (Ent- Gegenwärtigung and D’rendung), an “in-between” that is produced by them, a zone for possible centering occurs. Ent-Fremdung that comes about together with these two processes is thus not due to some subjective gravitational force, but is a field of tension that is not located in any specific part within the structure of the living present, but is in a sense “everywhere”, apotic. Husserl seems to mean that this constitutive self-aliening duplicity is a constant process that always underlies our passive intentional life as well as our entire experiential act-life, and not something that occurs just once. If we wouldn’t continue this passive dual self-alienation, there would be no self, no egoic centre that could reflectively-narcissistically reach out to itself in apodic evidence. The constitution of the “I” is a ceaseless process that knows of no pauses. The two aspects of “self”-constitution by means of a primary “self-alienation” (my temporal differ- ence to myself and my difference to the other) are not opposed, but in practice inseparable and always function intertwined one with the other: the self-transcending in the direction of time will always encounter that kind of intensified foreignness that stems from the other. This structure of Ent-Fremdung in its temporization in Husserl’s theory serves as the primary “groundless ground” for the possibility to understand the otherness of the other. In this sense, the analysis complies with the most general method- ogological requirements of transcendental phenomenology, its egological “Cartesianism”, even though admittedly there is not much of an ego to be found at this point.

Derrida’s critique of Husserl for being unable to think beyond the foundations of pure self- presence, pure perception, etc., in short: pre- sentifying modes of givenness (Gegenwartigkeit) can thus no longer be upheld. According to Derrida, it is the “complicity”, the “metaphysical presupposition in common” between psychology and phenomenology that lies behind Husserl’s adherence to presence, and behind that the complicity with occidental metaphysics at large (la voix et le phénomène, 20). But as we have seen, the genetic foundations of the first-level genetic phenomenology that were unearthed by means of the radicalized and the intersubjective reduc- tions also show a far more dynamic approach. Here we discovered the genetic pre-structure of representation (Vergewisserung) such as phantasy, memory of my own past and empathy as the givenness of the other, i.e. what are fund-amentally modes of givenness of that which is absent in relation to my extended now. These, it was shown, are not secondary in relation to the stable foundation of an ego, which stands over and against an alter ego in secure possession of itself by means of the self-affection of inner-time-consciousness, and can therefore be said to have already from the outset contaminated all points of origin.

Literature


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On Viewing: The Continuous Negotiation Between Image and Viewer in the Works of David Claerbout and Jeff Wall

Bert Vandenbussche

Introduction

Since minimalism, the relationship between an image and its public has been one of the main concerns of contemporary artists. Conceptualism, David Claerbout and Jeff Wall conceive of this relationship as a dynamic “game” that constantly oscillates between identification, distancing, and alienating. Perhaps this game can best be described as one of “continuous negotiation”. The term “negotiate”, after all, presupposes a negotiation between two parties (in this case between image and viewer): an exchange of “arguments” whereby the distance of the viewer in relation to the image can be determined. The addition of the adjective “continuous” points to how negotiations are never concluded. The relationship of the viewer to the image, in other words, cannot be pinned down definitively.

David Claerbout

Claerbout presents most of his projections in a context that is closely related to the cinematographic shot: one in which the exhibition space is completely blacked out and within which large format images are projected towards the front according to the classic aspect ratio 8:9. The artist even takes it a step further by aiming for continuity between the viewer and the real space of the projection-screen exhibition space. This is most apparent in works such as: The Blue Box (2002) and the second projection of American Car (2004–7), which fill the entire wall. These projections no longer allow the viewer to perceive the wall as a distinct entity and thereby the distinction between the exhibition space and the space represented by the image is eliminated. This effect is further enhanced by the fact that in the darkened space the viewer is literally surrounded by the light of the projection. By means of this, Claerbout’s projections exercise an irresistible attraction on the viewer in which he seems to be swallowed up by it, thus stimulating her identification with the image.

Furthermore, Claerbout’s projections are characterized by a carefully balanced sense of composition, lending them a considerable unity wherein they present themselves as closed and self-sufficient realities. This experience is akin to that of classical film shows, but perhaps can be attributed even more to the abstractive quality of paintings as described by Michael Fried in his studies of late 19th and 18th century painting in France. This impression of an autonomous reality allows the viewer to completely identify with the image, so much so that Claerbout’s viewer imagines herself wandering freely under the bridges in the no-man’s-land of the street, in the large garden of Villa Cervi in Antwerp (2008)—are completely suggested, they are a heterogeneous collage of people. This undirected effect allows the image to emerge from itself. Another effect of this estrangement comes from the way in which the projection of The Algiers Scene puts too much emphasis on the expressiveness of the happy moment; a fact the viewer is made aware of one more by the accumulation of images that each depict another point of view. Perhaps this explicitness becomes most clear in the very subtle oscillation of the characters. They are not professional actors, but Claerbout’s neighbours. He invited them into his studio and let them make several poses in his search for the right expressive attitudes. As we witness these attitudes over and over again, they become more or less unnatural because they are visibly acted. You as viewer eventually realize that they are staged. “Exhibiting a piece is always a bit like stretching out your hand and saying: ‘Please, take this’,” Claerbout stated.5 And taking the hand backward, I would add, as the viewer cannot identifi- cially identify with what is given. This continuous process of negotiation in his works—shifting between identification, distancing and alienation—is also at times significantly stirred and stimulated by the musical accompaniment. The suggestive soundtrack in Four Persons Stand ing takes the viewer in two continuities. It first builds up a dramatic sense of suspense, which lets the viewer feel that something is about to happen. It leads the viewer, as it were, into the image projection. But in fact the feeling of suspense—that “something” that actually never happens—is diminished by the soundtrack which leaves the viewer stranded with its unanswered expectations. This in turn leads the viewer back out of the projection. Villa Cervi and a movie that do not have a filmic soundtrack as such, but rather one of environmental noises, which are part of the projected reality (such as the blowing of the wind and the strumming guitar music in the former piece and the chirping of birds and the dripping in the second projection of the latter work). Claerbout, however, does not position the audio speakers at the height of the projection screen but spreads them over the entire exhibition space, paradoxically creating an acoustic effect. The viewer can hear the auditory impression that they are in the
space that is represented but is also simultaneously
readily aware of the real exhibition space. By
means of sound she “feels” the space, which is surrounding her.

Jeff Wall
Like Carlebach, Wall also deploys various strate-
gies in order to undermine the initial absorptive effect of his images. Once again image and
viewer are in an ongoing negotiation of their re-
lationship to one another. This relationship can be
analyzed through the same three movements:
identification, distanciation, and alienation.
However, as will be seen, Wall’s images fore-
ground their mise-en-scène more explicitly than
those of Carlebach.

foremost, the viewer feels constantly drawn to
identify with Wall’s images due to their content
as well as their formal characteristics. In the first
place, the artist makes a lot of use of absorptive
characters and motifs.25 Most of his characters are
perceived by what they are doing, their feelings
and/or thoughts and in no way acknowl-
dge the viewer’s presence. This is the case for
example with Adrian Walker, artist, drawing from
a specimen in a laboratory in the Dept. of Anatomy at
the University of British Columbia, Vancouver (1991).
The characters A Ventriloquist at a Birthday Party
to drink. 1995 (1995) and After “Spring Now” by
Yoshio Szwajcer, Antwerp Paris New York and Micheline
Zürich London; Yvon Lambert,
and galleries Hauser & Wirth,

min 12 sec. Courtesy the artist

an effect of alienation.

also the theatrical staging of the image creating
an illusion of the image were to be the actual
characters, created by the artist. This is strength-
ened even further in both works by the shore
placement of the characters on the terrain. The

Wall’s images, as is the case with Carlebach’s projections,
is literally engulfed by the work’s glow. A final
important consideration is the fact that Wall
usually affixes these light boxes at eye-level and
as such they cannot confront the viewer with his
overall position in the exhibition space.

Some details however undermine the absor-
ductive dynamic of most of Wall’s images, subtly
interrupting the identification of the viewer to
create a certain distanciation. This is perhaps best
explained on the basis of one of Wall’s best-
known works, The story Teller (1990), an appar-
ently absorptive image of six characters. The viewer
initially notices these characters that are looking
out of the image. In so doing they indicate that
the something that is attracting their attention is
actually happening outside of the image proper.
This implies that the image is no longer con-
ceived as a completely autonomous reality, it is
involved with a place outside of the image,
which is by definition invisible to the viewer.
The viewer is thus aware that she is looking at a lim-
ited representation, whereby her initial identi-
fication with the image is interrupted. Secondly
the clever positioning of the electricity wires
pointed out to the picture plane whereby they
throw up a minimally functional yet effective
barrier between the exhibition space in front of
the represented space behind the picture plane.
Can alert the viewer to the composition of the en-
tire image. They delineate a triangle, formed by
a piece of wood and the highway, which perhaps
is reminiscent of the triangular composition of
David’s Le Fornet du Croux (1784) and leads the
gaze of the viewer even deeper up to the white
house in the background which is just visible
beneath the electricity wires. In this way they
divide the image into a lower part, which more or
less corresponds to the landscape as such and an
upper part, which more or less corresponds to the
sky. In making the viewer aware of all this, the
wires are a visual marker of the artificiality and
be-to-be-ness of the image.

Other words by Wall indicate that a gradual
difference in the effectiveness of distanciation
needs to be taken into account. In general one
could state that the impact of this distanciating
dynamic is delineated by a lower and an upper
limit. The lower edge guarantees a minimal
distanciation, which hinders the viewer from re-
remaining identified with the image as in The
Flacocoz Memorial in the Jewish Cemetery (1987). On
the contrary, The Vampires’ Picnic (1999) operates
above the upper edge, demarcating the maxi-

25 Without being exhaustive, I would like to dis-

sions and continuities—the contradictions—
of my subject matter. The picture is a relation
of unlike things, montage is hidden, masked, but
present, essentially.26 Jump cut, in other words,
create yet another break between the representa-
tion and the reality represented between the
representation and the way in which the reality
presented presents itself as a montage. They
consequently reveal that the photographic
reality has been consciously pictured in order
for it to be seen by the viewer in a specific way.

Without being exhaustive, I would like to dis-
suss two kinds of jump cut, namely unnatural
image details and the representation of a
group as collage.

Certain image details make the viewer
clearly aware of the staging of the image. They
represent objects that do not fit in the reality
that is represented. This is the case of the bizarre
costume of the vembali’s character in The
Vampires’ Picnic, which is composed of a 17th century
collar, an army jacket and a skirt of rags. The
doll, moreover, is missing a sock and a shoe on its
left leg and thus takes on a further glittered ap-
pearance. As a consequence it becomes clear that
this is no ordinary child-friendly vembali’s
dummy as is to be expected at a birthday party.
Likewise the man’s clothing in Mill also reveals
that he cannot really be a beggar as suggested
by his attitude. He is impressively dressed in a
fashionable shirt and trousers, yet there are laces
missing from his recently polished shoes. Such
elements absolutely convince the viewer that the
image can no longer refer to an objective existing
reality but must have been consciously staged by
the artist.

Another effect of estrangement comes from
the way in which the various characters are
presented as a group within an image. The char-
acters of The Story Tellers and The Vampires’ Picnic
are completely absorbed by their own activity
and have little or no involvement with each other
(which can alter, but be expected from a group).
As a result they seem to have been depicted just
a bit too emphatically, wherein the image presents
itself as a collage of absorptive, autonomous
characters, created by the artist. This is strength-
ened even further in both works by the shore
placement of the characters on the terrain. The

problems of an image and by simultaneously af-
firming it, “They [the jump cuts] appear as their
opposites, as reference to a norm, the issue of
the image or picture. I accept the picture in that
sense, and want it to make visible the discontin
cuities and continuities—the contradictions—
of my subject matter. The picture is a relation
of unlike things, montage is hidden, masked, but
present, essentially.”24 Jump cut, in other words,
create yet another break between the representa-
tion and the reality represented between the
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issues of an existing reality, whereas they are in
actual stage varied precisely by the artist.
This staging becomes clear from the attitude of
some of the characters pictured in his images.
Although it isn’t always immediately noticeable,
many of Wall’s characters adopt a specific pose
which accentuates their significance within
the photograph, as is exemplified by Pictures for
Winston (1979). Model and artist both give
the impression that they are “aware of their presence
within a construction” (to use Wall’s words).21
This transposes from the particular poses of
the hands: the model humbly and subversively

8
groups of respectively one, two or three people. These smaller groups are more or less situated in the three corners of the square. In keeping with this, the poses are very humanistic, where a certain amount of coming and going would normally be expected. The characters subsequently give the impression of being frozen in their poses (instead of just having been frozen in their movement by the photographic capturing). Even the wandering characters of Mies give the impression, at a second glance, to be standing still. All these characters seem to be lifting their feet off the ground. This means that none of the legs are actually in movement at the moment of the recording. The characters have thus taken on the pose of the walker, but are in actual fact not walking. The expressiveness of their gestures comes forth from the cognizance that the characters are giving just a little too much expression to their psychological state as is the case with the gesture of the storytelling woman in Tey’s Folly and the subdued poses of the people at The Holocaust Memorial.

So conclude, it’s important to note once more how Wall does everything at his disposal to keep the construction of the image hidden as such. The dynamics of distribution and alienation can only ever counter our initial identification, but it cannot cancel it out completely. In doing so it merely insulates a process of continuous negotiation between the image and the viewer. This idea of a represented negation also concurs with Wall’s personal view of the way an artwork functions. “There are no closed works of art, really. My experience of works that have really admired is a kind of out-of-body experience. That is, it’s a kind of phenomenology of identification and disidentification which is continually happening, and which is essential to the experience, and even the possibility of experience.”

Notes
1. It was Claerbout’s explicit intention to give the impression that the hunchback in the picture was in fact standing in front of the screen in the viewer’s place. Personal interview with Claerbout in Fall 2004.
2. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Michael Fried published an extensive body of writing in which he attempted to sketch the evolution of French painting between roughly 1770-1914 in the face of the French painting by Claude Gellée and Gérôme and 1856 to 79 (with the onset of impressionism with Manet). His main point is that this French painting of that time is defined by an anti-aesthetic methodology, which he relates to the term “absorption”. See Michael Fried, Absorption and Transparency. Having and Not-possessing the Art of Claude Gellée (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 321. See also, Claire Bishop’s “Beyond Gellée” in Tey’s Folly.
3. According to Fried there were two means of conceiving the theatricality of photography. The first is what he calls the “photographic-photography” or the photographic way of representing actions or events, i.e. the photograph presents itself to the viewer as a record of events. The second is the “photographic painting” or the photographic way of representing characters, which is the way in which Claerbout’s images in light boxes can also be described, which is the way in which the cibachrome images in light boxes can also be described. “There are no closed works of art, really. My experience of works that have really admired is a kind of out-of-body experience. That is, it’s a kind of phenomenology of identification and disidentification which is continually happening, and which is essential to the experience, and even the possibility of experience.”
Pfui

Du bist ja keine Scheuche

Gleich ameph in der Haur

Tausch
It is surprising that Robert Smithson’s critical writings should give rise to a feeling of importance even though they don’t pretend to play on the same registers (financially, if you like) as the magazine, and even if they don’t find a proper audience for either of their fields.1 Daniel Birnbaum and Izabella Gral re- sume this reservation saying that the American critics opt for the former stance (death of criticism), the Europeans for the latter (future in the knowledge economy).2 In relation to this “cultural conflict” of criticism today, Smith- son’s “The work of art is a space of criticism” (Beckett). It doesn’t provide knowledge or facts relevant to sciences, not even to the art of history. And it doesn’t deal with careers, reconstructing the progress of artists and other aspects that was important for the market at the time. By itself, it draw on the light of the consensus (i.e. the topic- non-readily-as-discussed of the debates today; criticism need to be justified by some other field (and not even by art), it should be a servant. But if Smithson’s writings trigger the sense of importance, provokes an increased concentration and attention, it must be that they also project a different horizon behind criticism, and thus connect criticism to something else than money or knowledge.

Like a pointing dog this criticism “for noth- ing” indicates something important. In general, it is the sense of importance that structures experience and make the world non trivial. And in its context, we must say that rare art from being an object of positivist research or of a mere curiosity. If previously it is a philo- sophically savage to say, “this thing here is impor- tant, fantastic” , because “important” as such raises a problem that is outside the framework. Obviously it is philosophy as part of his artistic work, and not by art alone. A sign has to be used in a forward going movement, it has to be pushed into a proper context, be regarded as “the centre of a paradise” (Novals). What substitutes reality as a point of departure, a case a particular sign used as perspective.

The work of art as the impossibility of criti- cism is a veritable appeal to go deeper into the work descriptive criticism like this: he uses desire, and puts hard guffaws onto soft giggles. A fit of laughter becomes prismatic, a happy outburst becomes a work, a forward going movement, it has to be pushed into a proper context, be regarded as “the center of a paradise” (Novals). What substitutes reality as a point of departure, a case a particular sign used as perspective.

For criticism today (or rather tomorrow), the major importance of Smithson’s criticism proba- bly resides in the liberties he takes, his sovereign use of criticism. Sovereignty comes to my mind when faced with Smithson’s creations of critical tools, such as the “ha-ha-crystal” concept, leading to a work descriptive criticism like this: he uses desire, and puts hard guffaws onto soft giggles. A fit of mirth becomes prismatic, a happy outburst becomes a work, a forward going movement, it has to be pushed into a proper context, be regarded as “the center of a paradise” (Novals). What substitutes reality as a point of departure, a case a particular sign used as perspective.

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It is obvious from his critical texts on Donald Judd’s works that the abstains from reality, object and mythology. Judd is the perfect artist to use for demonstration of this critical thinking since Judd is the champion of reality (posing the gallery as “real space”) and objects, specific objects that are neither representations, nor abstractions. Therefore, Judd felt with his art, American art could escape from its far too well-tried Europe, leaving the old “European” problem of illusionism behind. A consequent critic aware of the history of art should have said of Judd’s work that literalness was king and no “illusions” produced. To go along with that interpretation in a piece of criticism would have been share mytholog- y to Simondon’s mind. What he found was something else: “A reversible up and down quality was an important feature […]. It is impossible to tell what is hanging from what or what is supporting what. Ups and downs and downs are ups […]. What is inside vanishes to meet the inside, while what is inside vanishes to meet the outside” (6).

He found illusion at the core of Judd’s work, turn- ing them into signs of a different space than the real one. It is liberating the works from an anthropological or “organic” notion of space, where a body is always implied at the center, head up, feet down, left here, and right here. This rational illusion is according to Kant the fundamental condition of the critique of judgment”.11 Thus, it is also the fundamental piece of a “reality concept”. Judd’s work comes from the works of Judd, but from elsewhere (from the critic Judd, among others), from the mythology. The effect of Simondon’s “man as one of alienation” Judd did not recognize his work in that description. That it turns away from what was thought to be important.

Let’s leave Simondon’s analysis of Judd at this point, to pick it up later in order to show that Simondon actually carried out criticism in accordance to our construction.

The next practical difficulty is how could a critic turn the work, as an impossibility of criticism, into an “object” for criticism? By a liquification of the object in the work. In art, he said in an interview, “there is no object, any more than you can say that a painting by [Kazimir] Ma- levich is an object. It explicitly tells you that it’s not an object.”12 In an article, Simondon explains that this Malévich painting has to do with an “unbounded state”, an experience of a “physi- cal absence” and “suspension of horizons”.13 Instead of transcending the boundary between subject and object in space, through projection, the criticism should do it in time. And once again, passing the object in time, it sets the mind or the instant, when time oscillates in a circumcircled stage.14 Actually, if an object is an art, it contains a movement of time, even if static. This time depends on the viewer (90). At the same time, perception is a process, the mind should turn its attention to the time passing in looking at the work, how it “takes place in time” (90). Because “if a thing is seen through the consciousness of temporality, it is changed into something that is nothing”. (90). It looks like we have reached the point where the impression of criticism “for nothing” is made. It’s the effect of a properly critical passivity revealing a stream of time running through the work. And this time continues to be the work “indefinitely” understood as some kind of catastrophic time that is only preceding by duece, a time only operating on, and thus recognizing as real, what could be an object of entity and def differentiation and thus such, not to say far more, or say far more, before it can be capable of reaching a level of sovereignty, this capacity resides in the passivity of the critic and presupposes objects without existence, non- objects, nothing, i.e., a level without something that is the further conceptual and use these non-objects to be used. These non-objects change over time, and criticism can and must determine the slices of time characterizing the object at a certain time in a sovereign manner for its own use. Criticism differs from an object that is the circumference of the infinite. Time itself entails something like a fictionalizing force that creates fragments from it that then def differentiation. Again, time is nothing, if it is not breaking apart only in order to destroy the pieces anew: “The fiction enacted in the endless is a bit a manner, corresponding to it’s sense of importance. Our best possibility to get a glimpse at this “feminizing” of objects is art: “Only when art is fragmented, discontinuous and incompleteness can we know about that vacuous entity that includes object and determined meanings” (211). If art is not a matter of projected reality, of a given extra-ar- tistic system of importance, it is because it is not a matter of opinion and meanings. It is a matter of a vacuum entity, waiting to be temporarily occupied by a subject of some kind. What is impor- tant, Simondon’s very notion of importance is that place is always vacuum, always on its way of emptying itself, destroying its content, filling up the eternity of the hospitality of the eternally. But the only way to create a vacuum is by a critic in time and experience and writing that are fragmented, discontinuous and incompleteness. Criticism doesn’t have the material capacity of objects, and thus presupposes that art is given a unity it doesn’t have. As a vacuum, a critic is not a part of a complete interpretation of a work, you can be sure it rests upon a falsification of the art in question.15 There is the place to pick up Simondon’s inter- pretation of Judd again. He actually finds a new importance there: “The important phenomena is always the basic lack of substance at the core of the “fact” (211). What is important about those boxes is that they are not real objects in space, but that “these very definitive works verge on the destruction of disappearances” (211). His art actually “vanishes into a series of motionless intervals” that is time (211). Thus, to simondon’s mind, he has redemned Judd’s work from the “schematiz- ing” mythology of reality and object by finding time, the “temporal” relating to the art of the artist), certain critic defraud the work and mind of the artist. Artists with a weak view of time are easily defrauded by this victimizing kind of criticism, and are reduced into some nothing they are as nothing. The only way not to turn critical discourse into mythology is to find the time in the work, and to treat it as an object of fiction. Otherwise, critics will project their own reality into it, and inscribe it, i.e., themselves, in a historical mythology.

Simondon’s criticism brings art back to time, but time is not a matter of fact—it still it seems to correspond to the sense of importance—that is the impression of criticism for nothing. Whitehead get this sense that “the idea of a vacuous, intellectual myth, the myth of finite facts”15

• “Importance is derived from the immanence of infinitude in the finite.” As we saw, simondon’s infinitude appears to be time. If his criticism is relevant today again, it certainly depends on this fundamental break with the thought of finitude that dominated thinking during the twentieth century. This fetishism of finitude is probably the reason the concept of importance has not been a part of the horizon of thinking and criticism. This infinity, though, is not the old transcendence one, but an immanent infinity. It seems, though, like Simondon places the im- portance, not at all within the finite, but in the “discontinuity” of the infinite. Time itself entails something like a fictionalizing force that creates fragments from it that then def differentiation again. Time is nothing, if it is not breaking apart only in order to destroy the pieces anew: “The fiction enacted in the endless is a bit a manner, corresponding to the sense of importance. Our best possibility to get a glimpse at this “feminizing” of objects is art: “Only when art is fragmented, discontinuous and incompleteness can we know about that vacuous entity that includes object and determined meanings” (211). If art is not a matter of projected reality, of a given extra-ar- tistic system of importance, it is because it is not a matter of opinion and meanings. It is a matter of a vacuum entity, waiting to be temporarily occupied by a subject of some kind. What is impor-
Architecture, Critique, Ideology

Sven-Olov Wallenstein

"To dispel anxiety by understanding and internalizing its causes would seem to be one of the principal ethical imperatives of bourgeois art"—the opening lines of Manfredo Tafuri's Fragments of a Utopia (1977) provide a condensed view of his understanding of modernity and the role of art and architecture in capitalism. For Tafuri, art and architecture did indeed allow us to grasp the reasons for the clearances and anxieties that beset the modern subjects, but this understanding also, in a second step, produces an illusory mastery that leads us to affirm, even desire, the most troubling aspects of our condition as an expression of our own will. For Tafuri, breaking this spell, which is both theoretical and practical, means taking up a truly critical stance toward the present, one consequence of which is the sharp divide between an "operatory" history that he saw in successors like Sigfried Giedion, Bruno Zevi, and Reyner Banham, who attempt to link past and present in terms of progress, and a critical history that would expose the contemporary moment as the result of contradictions located beyond the reach of architecture and urbanism. In some respects, Tafuri's work is about rectifying the anxiety of modernity and allowing it to have its full impact on us, and the widespread fatigue and even rejection that his work evokes among contemporary theorists is undeniably in many respects signs of a repression and an erasure of the dialectical models inherited from the early 20th century avant-garde culture, sometimes in favor of a theory of architecture, an instrument of thought, as Tafuri's point of view appears as a simple return to "architectural ideology" in its purest sense. On the other hand, to stubbornly uphold the ethos of an ideology critique inherited from the yesteryea and yore does not seem to live up to the phrase from Francia Porfirio that Tafuri often refers to: "being cunning like doves" (Astuti come colombe). The shock of cultural production that has marked the last decades, taking us through the debates around postmodernism, globalization, electronic capitalism, post-Fordism and several other con- cepts cooped to grasp a fleeting and increasingly liquid present, can undoubtedly be read as a gradual abandoning of the Marxist conceptual- ity that once formed the matrix for the "Venice School", but also as a continual displacement of a fundamental set of problems: how to connect the self-contained mode of production with the artistic, architectural, and urban forms that surround us, and how to forge theoretical tools that are as advanced as capital itself.

In the dense writings of Tafuri and his col- leagues, a wide array of divergent and often conflicting influences are brought together in tenuous syntheses; Marx and Nietzsche, Ben- jamino and Hegel, Simmel, Weber, and the classic texts of German sociology from the first decades of the 20th century. To some extent, this synthesis—and even more so the split between operative and critical history opened up by Tafuri—may be read in the light of a crisis of Marxian theory itself, emerging at that moment when theory and practice began to disconnect, and the critique of ideology started to point less to a set of alternatives than to a position of nihilism and "negative thought" as Massimo Cacciari called it, a negativity that was as central to the landscape of intellectual Europe as it was in the 1970s. The analysis of architecture and urbanism here becomes an uneasiness, a perplexity, a question, a moment, although a privileged one, in the read- ing of power, and subject production as an infinite split that is based in architecture.

A basic thesis in Tafuri, recurring throughout all of his works that deal with modern architec- ture and the illusions of operative history, is that architecture is structurally incapable of solving those social contradictions that it addresses, which is just as much a theoretical presupposition as an empirical observation. This claim underlies his analysis of how the modern masters were caught up in an illusion—a project which is always also a trap, the original title of his dense and somber 1973 book Pragmatico. We are thus far from the failure of these grand projects, which have been called the "shadow of the total project of totalitarian politics, generations of historians have attempted to show how they, correctly understood, still contain the "hidden unity" and "secret synthesis" that will heal our culture and art, or, the "organic architecture" of the future (Zevi), to cite two of the most prominent cases. Tafuri can in this sense be located between two worlds: on the one hand, modern architecture and architecture of modernity as the true heir of the tradition; the second (Zevi, Banham) wanted to rethink modernism as a more complex phenomenon and retrieve aspects that had been lost; the third to engage in a reading of the critical work of modernity, beyond which it could neither be simply continued nor begun anew, and which called for a step back that would take us out of architectural discourse and into a critique of modernity as such. Tafuri's work remains itself, unusually and amusingly, on this critical line. Some- times retreating into the expertise of architectural culture, sometimes demanding a wholesale critique of society and a revolutionary action for which neither the architect nor the aesthetic could seem equipped, it lives off its own critical contradictions and its unfulfilled promises. These contradictions seem less extreme today, at least in the specific form they assumed since the last decades, taking us through the debates around postmodernism, globalization, electronic capitalism and the 1970s; the sharp divide between operative and a critical history appears difficul- tly to upholdmodern architecture as a critical text on historical writing; the forms of power, and subject production in the modern world have become far more insidious and diversified than they were some forty years ago; a third wave of modernist historians: the first (Tafuri and Zevi, Banham) has moved into the digital and virtual, forming alliances with the most sophisticated image technologies and post-Fordist forms of produc- tion, the effect that ideas of "resistance" and
“critique” seem like relics from a distant past. Yet it can be argued that the task of critical theory remains more urgent than ever, precisely in the face of such new power structures, which demand a fundamental rethinking of its tools and procedures. What, if anything, would be the place of Tafuri and the critique of architectural ideology in the present conjuncture? The following contributions all address crucial aspects of Tafuri’s legacy, but also, although more indirectly, the question of what a critical theory of architecture could mean today, and in this they are as relevant to historical research as to an understanding of the present moment.

Erik Heckert’s essay opens this section by asking for the reason behind Tafuri’s enduring and ever “haunting” presence in contemporary architectural discourse. As we have seen, this kind of Marxist analysis, deeply embedded in the conflicts of the Italian left in the 1970s, may today seem wholly outdated; or this is at least what many would wish. The ideological question of modern architecture—which Tafuri and his fellows travelled in great depth, drawing on analyses of architecture and urban planning in the Soviet Union, the SocialDemocratic state of the Weimar Republic, and the U.S.—remains valid however, she suggests, and the contradiction this analytical work has left us with, above all in the guise of the divide between a critical and an operative reading of history, remains a crucial issue, no matter much we would like to mitigate or even repress it. In Herkartz’s reading, we must nonetheless distinguish between the program for architectural autobiography practiced by Tafuri and the context of its emergence. In fact, she argues, the idea of the “Metropole” as the essential site of Capital, developed by Tafuri and Castriotta, is still very much alive today, although approached from the opposite angle, most famously in the writings and projects of Rem Koolhaas, who can be understood as the most rebellious of Tafuri’s implicit disciples. The question remains to what extent this type of reworked avant-garde sensibility—which draws on the structural parts of capitalist culture within the space of “negative thought,” as it was formulated by Castiglione in a series of essays from the same period, a thought that brings out the irreversible conflicts of modernity that had already been assumed by advanced bourgeois thinkers like Weber, and transforms them into a political instrument for the alienation class culture (all of which finds its most obvious echoes, Arendt notes, in current Italian political thought on cognitive work as “immaterial labor.”) This move required that we separate architects and planners as intellectual workers, not only as just as manipulation of formal design solutions. Seen from the perspective of the longer political context, Arendt argues, the reading of Tafuri’s work as the promotion of a “death of architecture” proves to be misleading.

For deeper pursuit of historians like Chion and Leach, and as Leach notes, the question of the connection between the escalation of the past and its critical value in the present became more and more tenuous, both for Tafuri himself and in the reception of his work. This divide between history and theory, between reflections on the past and the kind of reflection that is inherent in production, is one of Tafuri’s most questionable legacies. Whether overcoming it also means to overcome Tafuri is an open question.

Note

1. “Anxiety” (Derrida) should not be understood as a psychological concept but as an idea that energizes the analysis of existential consciousness and the theory of the human condition.


3. For the sake of “negative thought,” see Emmanuel Ca- ssette, Architecture and Ideology (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT 1993).

4. For a discussion on the relation between architecture and technology, see The Architecture of Machine Age (New York: Prestel 1994).

5. The question of the connection between the escalation of the past and its critical value in the present became more and more tenuous, both for Tafuri himself and in the reception of his work. For a deeper pursuit of historians like Chion and Leach, and as Leach notes, the question of the connection between the escalation of the past and its critical value in the present became more and more tenuous, both for Tafuri himself and in the reception of his work. This divide between history and theory, between reflections on the past and the kind of reflection that is inherent in production, is one of Tafuri’s most questionable legacies. Whether overcoming it also means to overcome Tafuri is an open question.
In 1970, Manfredo Tafuri published a long article entitled “Lavoro intellettuale e sviluppo capitalista” (Intellectual work and capitalist development) in the journal Critica dell’ideologia. The article followed the publication of the more famous Per una critica dell’ideologia architettonica (For a critique of architectural ideology) published in the same journal in 1969. What is remarkable about “Intellectual Work and Capitalist Development” is that it contains no reference to architecture. The article is a dense reflection on the nature of intellectual work itself seen within the conditions established by the capitalist system of production. It is “For a Critique of Architectural Ideology” that had a large critical reception at the time of its publication, “Intellectual Work and Capitalist Development” remained in its shadow. By re-examining Tafuri’s critique via his argu- ments about intellectual work, it is possible to suggest that Tafuri’s critique was so much, or not, only directed towards architectural form and the architectural project, but also concerned with the theme of “intellectual work” in general. For this reason, the aim of the following essay is to recover the concept of intellectual work in Tafuri’s critique as a major force of his argument, and as the reason for the radicality of his critique of architectural ideology.

Through his intense activity of historicizing, Manfredo Tafuri was the first intellectual in the field of architectural history and criticism to under- stand that intellectuals were no longer able to address the issue of social and cultural changes provoked by capitalist development in a perspectival or, in other words, according to Tafuri, there was no outside position within capitalist development, since the totality of such development was constituted by the reality of work, which also incorporated the role of the intellectual. It was for this reason that he under- stood that the critique of capitalism could no longer be produced from an external point, but only from one with/i, i.e., starting from the cata- gories and forms through which intellectuals were—consciously or unconsciously—culturally mediating the effects of capitalist production. For Tafuri and for those who influenced his cri- tique, this new condition meant that any critical

meaningful tension. Is the value of this historian prominent in the great list of postwar Italy, or rather in the fact that he has transcended his national context to become important for a wide international public? In other words, was Tafuri a fascinating historical incident, possible then, under those circumstances, but also impossible to repeat? It is my contention that Tafuri should not merely be considered a historical phenomenon, entirely defined by his context. Rather, the basis for the “nature of Tafuri” should be the universality of his program for a new architec- tural history.

Tafuri’s program

What was Tafuri’s program in architectural his- tory? When Tafuri started to publish his main works, his apogee, at the end of the 1960s, he single-handedly created a rupture with what was then a well-established historiographic tradition. In publications such as Tavo’s et al’l’architettura e sviluppo capitalist (1973) Tafuri openly criticized historiographical giants such as Wittkower, Zevi, and Giedion, whose work remained a common point of reference for archi- tectural theory and history well into the 1980s. In fact, what historians of modern architecture such as Nikolaus Pevsner (1949-1976) or Sigfried Giedion (1888-1950) had in common was that they worked from a mental conviction about the place of architecture in a modern world. Fueled by a belief in progress, this was the central left- ism behind their writing: the historian writing about modern architecture also identifies with the modern architect. If the architect builds for a better world, then the historian should reflect this ambition in his history, for instance through the choice of buildings discussed, for example. The architectural history that resulted from these attempts was optimistic in nature, speaking about artistic revolution and about the modern architect as a hero. Tafuri however no longer saw it as his task to confirm the manu- festatory trajectory of the Modern Movement, independently from the agenda of the architect, Tafuri connected architecture to a certain ideo- logical load. Not the confirmation of the ways of the modern architects, but rather to expose and critically analyze them as a form of modern ideology. Tafuri thereby introduced a discourse that was far more complicated and also far more negative. In the 1960s, Tafuri introduced new categories whose relevance for architectural history was at that time unknown. For example, in Tavo’s e sviluppo capitalist (1973) Tafuri pointed to the work of Roland Barthes, thereby proposing to see architecture as a system of signs that, just like literature, photography or cinema, was essentially an attempt to give meaning to the world around us—an operation which always ends to a certain degree failed. Tafuri invented new, puzzling tropes with which to reflect on modern architecture: “operative criticism,” the ideology of architecture” or “regressive utopia.” Once the identification with the goals of the architect was left behind, Tafuri was preoccupied with one principal question: what is modernity and what is the role played by architecture in modernity? How can the constant tension and implicit conflict between architects and their time be explained?

Once the identifi- cation with the goals of the architect was left behind, Tafuri was preoccupied with one principal question: what is modernity and what is the role played by architecture in modernity? How can the constant tension and implicit conflict between architects and their time be explained? The concept of the Metropolis—at the portolite of the intrinsic negativity of the large city—became central to Tafuri’s understanding of modern architecture. “Metropolis” did not simply apply to modern urban experiences of constant speed, innovation and change; in Tafuri’s writing the Metropolis had an additional value, as it was raised to the status of a theoretical category. For both Tafuri and Massimo Cacciari, “Metropolis” was the fig- ure for the life of capitalism, as the general form for the rationalization of social relations. Modern- ity is Metropolis. The rational-capitalist system only has one place, and that is the Metropolis. In 1973, the year of the publication of Progetto atta- to, Tafuri’s friend, the philosopher and political activist Cacciari, published the book Metropole—l’aggett grande citt di Sombart, Endell, Scheffler e Simmel. It was, claimed Cacciari, German
critical intellectuals, they saw this as their task. Architectural history, architectural theory, and the role played by architectural ideology within the existing narrative of modern architectural history. Instead of the prefiguring of a new world, the avantgardes understood their task as making the shift from stage to plan. For Tafuri, the avantgardes were a complex and contradictory bunch, they were all faced with the same problem of finding the proper attitude to face the metamorphic condition. As Gail Day observes, “the plan” for Tafuri did not refer to a fixed model but rather to the process of constant intervention in the system, to absorb capitalism’s contradictions at ever higher levels. To study the role of architecture-as-ideology meant for Tafuri studying the different ways in which “the negative” was incorporated into the very process of social and economic development as capital’s power. Again, it is remarkable that Tafuri stays very close to the existing narrative of modern architectural history when he states that the avantgardes are marked by their anti-historicalism. It was this shifting movement that, according to Tafuri, allowed the avantgardes to “explode towards the future,” to become activists and so to find a role within the emerging “planner-states” of the interwar years—the only possible way for them to survive.

The future of Tafuri

What elements of Tafuri’s program still have value today? Since Tafuri’s rupture with the so-called “operative history,” architectural history can no longer be an apology for the great masters. Again, it is remarkable that Tafuri stays very close to the existing narrative of modern architectural history when he states that the avantgardes are marked by their anti-historicalism. It was this shifting movement that, according to Tafuri, allowed the avantgardes to “explode towards the future,” to become activists and so to find a role within the emerging “planner-states” of the interwar years—the only possible way for them to survive.

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a position for architecture meant to repress or deny its insights. Instead, architecture for Tafuri became a “technique of control of the physical environment”: an element of power in an environment dominated by other elements of power. As a consequence of viewing architecture as ideologi- cal, political and social factors are no longer a factor against which architecture positions itself; “architectural ideology” is an actor in a complex fabric made up of other social, cultural, political actors. From the study of individual monuments, architectural history has moved on to study the dynamics of processes, institutes, and tech- niques. However, at the same time it is the core element of Tafuri’s program that remains most controversial today: his shift from “positive” to “negative” or, better said, from “heroic” to “critical”. Tafuri has provided an alternative for an affirmative architectural history and has thus confronted architecture with a considerable cri- tical burden. It is significant that this criticality did not find a continuation after Tafuri. While after Tafuri other forms of architectural history have appeared—histories that, for example, redrew the exclusive attention on the architect to a study of more anonymous cities and regions—it is a question of whether or not these histories are not still written in an affirmative way, as heroic histories of the progressive conquest of man over earth and of culture over nature. In the same sense, after Tafuri, a number of architects have appeared that seem to live according to Tafuri’s parameters. In particular, we may think here of Rem Koolhaas’s deftly immersed in the urban inferno. Koolhaas seems the perfect exemplifica- tion of life in the Metropolis: this architect not only accepts the harsh reality of the Metropolis, he also faces the negativity of it, he meets capital head-on and tries to outwit it. However, the point of view from which one accomplishes such an action does make a difference: whether it is the quietist assumption of late capitalism, as is the case with Koolhaas, or the development of a critique of it, as happened in Venice. Koolhaas still stands in the tradition of the modernist avant-garde: he studies the most intimate structures of moder- nity and then declares himself an advocate of them. Following the modernist slogan “if I don’t like it, it won’t stay”, Koolhaas remains at a face value. Here lies a fundamental difference to Tafuri, whom the cultural expressions of modernity wore a form of ideology: a delineating veil, an illusion, something that could very well be quite different from what it pretended to be. What presents itself as very modern can easily be a tradition in disguise and vice versa. It is here that the shift is made from mere description, or even analysis, to a critical analysis.

Any consideration of Tafuri’s legacy must also take into account the fact that his reception has been problematic. The reasons for this warranted exception are equally significant for the future of architecture. In the first place, there is the impact of Tafuri’s pessimism, which had a paralyzing effect upon many architects. Books like Progetti e riprese were originally made as direct assessments of the possibilities of architectural practice. At the same time, Tafuri himself has always rejected apocalyptic readings of his work. Tafuri’s message was not easy for historians either. In the middle of the 1980s, when Tafuri wrote his capoatria, postmodernism in architec- ture was heralding the return of history as a seri- ous factor in design. However, at the same time, Lyotard wrote the Postmodern Condition (1979), waving goodbye to the Grand Narratives and a universal understanding of history. Tafuri also broke with the Grand Narratives of his predeces- sors Pessner and Giedion. However, instead of consolidating the newly achieved self-conscious- ness of the historian by providing a clean-cut answer to the question of what history means to architecture, Tafuri always problematized the nature of architectural history that at no point results in a “solution” or a formula to be used by other historians. Tafuri did not offer a hold for architectural historians, no models to be copied. To a certain extent, historians were left equally clueless after Tafuri. As a consequence, “history” nowadays seems to figure as an empty vessel in debates on architecture. While history has long been bereft of universal significance, few people in architecture ask the question: what history are you talking about, what is your un- derstanding of history? This is not only a pity for those of us interested in history. A discipline that does not know its past does not know its future either. This seems an adequate description of the nature of affairs in architecture.

**The Mandate of Intellectuals**

The effects of capitalist development on cultural production led many Italian intellectuals to question their political mandate and thus to find the role of intellectuals in a capitalist context. It is in this context that postmodernism in architecture is situated. Tafuri’s translation of the writings of two quintessential critical essay writers, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, contributed to the interest in the literary form of the “critical essay”. The social and cultural changes provided by the rapid modernization of the country aroused suspicion of traditional literature and artistic forms in which the mediating role of the author was not questioned. For this reason, the use of the critical essay format is strategic, and it was seen as the most legitimate form of cultural production because of its explicit self-reflexivity as a critical form. This Italian translation of the essays of two quintessential critical essay writers, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, contributed to the interest in the literary form. For Adorno, the critical essay was the truly heroic and anti-institutional form of mediating the concept of public truth. As he wrote in “The Essay as Form”, the essay is the most radical dialectical form because of its explicitly mediated character. By making ex- plicit its artificial construction, its self-reflexive editorial nature, the essay acts from within the reified sphere of cultural production in which it lives, in the nature of architecture itself.

7. For a discussion on the essay format, see, for example, Rudolf Arnheim, “The essay as art”, The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 20, 1961, 369–376.
8. Cacciari, ibid., 105.
17. Cacciari, ibid., 105.
18. Cacciari, ibid., 105.
19. Cacciari, ibid., 105.
20. Cacciari, ibid., 105.
on the subject itself, on the "author as producer," to use Benjamin's words. This self-interrogative form in which the work is critical is not through its message, but through its medium, through its construction, was Tafuri's most fundamental critique of the architectural culture of that time, which was more anxious to deliver statements than to assess its own instruments of thought. But before arriving at this critique it is important to mention an intellectual that would have a great influence of Tafuri's critique of ideology. 

Between the 1960s and the 1970s the intellectual that more than anyone in Italy invested in the essay as the most radical form of criticism of intellectual work within a capitalist society was Franco Fortini. A poet and an influential communist intellectual and for a short period close to the Operaist, Fortini produced his most important book, Verità di poesia (Verification of the powers), an anthology of essays published in 1968. It is interesting to note that this book on literature, culture, intellectual work and capitalist development. According to Fortini, within advanced capitalism, the mandate of the "intellectual's mandate" (mandato degli intellettuali), i.e., how the role of intellectual work was determined was invoked as the class conflict within capitalist development. According to Fortini, within advanced capitalism, the mandate of (communist) intellectuals could no longer be defined by the theme of anti-fascist. In other words, the critical function of intellectuals could not be served by denouncing the contradiction in the repression of freedom. The intellectual's role no longer involved advancing the problem of freedom of speech, but rather now addressed the problem of the repression of freedom as a new form of ideological ideologism. 

The most famous essay in the anthology, titled "Notai come colombe." (Cunning as doves), focused on the critique of ideological ideologism as the latter was produced by progressive culture. It is important to consider this article because its main thesis not only condensed the Italian debate about the role of intellectual work within capitalist development, but it also provided Tafuri with the critical blueprint for his critique of architectural ideologies. "Notai come colombe" was originally published in 1968 in the cultural journal Il Manifesto, directed by the writers Italo Calvino and Elio Vittorini, in an issue devoted to the theme of culture and industrial work. In the same issue there were essays written by Calvino and Umberto Eco, among others. For these leftists and "progressive" intellectuals, the factory became the new cultural epicenter of literary and artistic experimental practices. It was this new sensibility, mixing secular reformism and artistic experimentation, that generated the avant-garde revivs in Italy of which Eco's "Gruppo 63" became the most important manifestation. Avanguardate such techniques as collage, estrangement, and technological experimentation became the devices through which the members of Gruppo 63 attempted to sublimate the effects of industrialisation on social relationships. It was precisely against this ideological use of cultural experimentation in order to mediate and thereby the effects of production on society, and especially on intellectual work, that Fortini directed his critique. The two poles that defined Fortini's critique comprised, on the one hand, an analysis of the political economy of intellectual work, and on the other, an analysis of its aesthetic manifestation. Political economy was used by Fortini as a tool to describe the way capitalist affirmation within society manifested itself through its systematic cultural self-deception. 

In 1968, Fortini, according to Tafuri, achieved precisely what that "Operative Historicism" meant: an intellectual device that he names "Teorie e storia dell'architettura", the forthright, dogged and (selectively) rigorous appraisal of the architectural history in its crudest form in Teorie e storia dell'architettura: the presentation of a series of relationships: between reality and its representation in 20th century, this form of representation ancient knowledge, paradigmatically differentiated from the realities of the city, is evidenced in Brunelleschi's design for Santa Maria del Fiore. These moments of the mid-fifteenth century introduce a distinction between architecture and architectural practice. In other words, architecture is intellectually separable from the fabric in which it sits, the medieval urban setting of the Renaissance architect's practice, because of those values that brings to bear on the art of building that are not intrinsic to the art of construction. 

Archi-tectura dell'umanesimo, published in 1969, Tafuri locates the source of this distinction in the intellectual device that he names "architectural ideology," a formulation appearing more prominently than year in the widespread "Per una critica dell'ideologia architettonica". As we shall see, this same temporal concept of the modern inflects both of the specific periods in which the two pieces of writing that we can nonchalance as a subject, in turn, to a theory of architectural culture in the long modern era, and which applies in its crudest form in Teorie e storia, Tafuri argues that the "architectural historian's role in this phenomenon remains a key issue. In fact, it becomes demonstrably pressing, directly informing the tone of the pertinent chapter of Teorie e storia, "La critica operativa". 

I wish to address these three simple points that each, in their own respective ways, return to a theme that is integral to the fourth chapter of Teorie e storia dell'architettura (1969), Manfredo Tafuri's famous diagnosis of architectural criticism that clarifies his concept and his analysis of the modern era and the implications of that definition both historically and for the place of its historians therein. The second turns to the nature of the so-called "critical" architecture that, in turn, points to the vestiges over the period roughly covered in Progetti cronici (1970), Tafuri's reflection on architectural culture and what this means in the twentieth century. The role of the architectural historian in this phenomenon remains a key issue. In fact, it becomes demonstrably pressing, directly informing the tone of the pertinent chapter of Teorie e storia, "La critica operativa". 

Teorie e storia, the forethought, dug (defensive) rigorously appraisal of the architectural historian's role in this phenomenon remains a key issue. In fact, it becomes demonstrably pressing, directly informing the tone of the pertinent chapter of Teorie e storia, "La critica operativa". Tafuri's critique of ideology took form from these premises. Before it would be applied to intellectual work in general, Tafuri's critique, as it was formulated in his 1968 book Teorie e storia dell'architettura, focused on the way "theorists" of architecture attempted to render the idea of modernity in terms of progress. This critique consisted in showing how a such a historical perspective was achieved by systematically masking the very cause of such progress, meaning the continuous state of capitalist crisis provoked by the development of the modern society, Tafuri first applied the critique of ideologies to those literary texts within historiography that he deliberately attempted to "ensure" modern and contemporary architectures about the reformist ideology of the "theoretical" mandate. Fortini as a tool to describe the way capitalist ideology and to not adjust the terms of criticism to the standard of the ideological goal of legitimizing the traditions of modern architecture. If the protagonists of the so-called "operative" history, Tafuri places in this context all the major historians of modern architecture of the time, such as Nicolaus Pevsner, Sigfried Giedion, and Bruno Zevi. If we place Tafuri's criticism within the context of the critique of reformism as this critique was elaborated by Pevsner and Giedion, it appears clear that the object of his critique is not (and if so not at all) the historical developments made by these historians in order to fit their architectural history into modern architectures that do not represent bourgeois power, but rather satisfied the good conscience of progressive intellectuals. Facing such extreme levels of cultural mystification in which modernization was reformism and reformism was the new progressive face of capitalist domination, Fortini's conception of ideologism was critical involved becoming "cunning as doves and innocent as foxes" meaning to constantly and meaningfully the terms of criticism to the standards of the cunning of capitalist ideology and to not surrender to the easy naivety of good intentions typical of reformist approaches. Moreover, for Fortini it was precisely a critical analysis of the precisely most genuine attempts of social agitation. Tafuri led Operaists intellectuals such as Alberto Asor Rosa and Massimo Cacciari to invite Tafuri to contribute to their journal Contropiano. Tafuri's contribution coincided with the second year of his tenure at the I.S.S.O. (Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia), and his contribu- tion to the journal was expected to define the approach of his newly founded Institute di storia and the possibility of the anti-reformist critique of ideology within the discipline of architecture and urban planning. 

Architectural History, Today

Andrew Leach

In Architecture dell'umanesimo that architectural ideology, in the sense of values that determine or shaper architecture, is inextricable from the representation of the past as history. The tendency of history towards narrative renders this process easier, and these histories were lived under the disguise of fashion, or the past in their lines or even corresponding to the val- ues proper to the present lend architecture both a direct political intervention. The journal Contropiano. According to the editors of the journal (among them, among other things, was Antonio Negri), the most advanced level of class struggle was precisely what they called the "cunning of ideology," meant to co-opt to its ideological goal through which capital- ist domination insinuates itself into the institutions of the working class, movement. Yet this radical critique of ideology intended to be not an
end in itself, but the premise to the political counter-plan—the iconoptia—to the plan of the capital. According to the editors of the journal this counter-plan would have consisted in the working class appropriation of the most advanced and radical elements, especially the bourgeois intellectual tradition that Cacciari, in a famous article published in the same year, elaborated in the outline of "Critique of Architectural Ideology", defined as "negative thought".15 For Tafuri, the essay "Intellectual Work and Capitalist Production", published a few months after "For a Critique of Architectural Ideology", at- tempt to expand the critique of ideology at this level of analysis. In this article, Tafuri argued in order to go beyond the ideological under- standing of intellectual work, it was necessary to define the link between the cycles of capital development, the economic reorganization that these cycles implied and the ideological mediations produced by intellec- tuals. According to Tafuri, the tradition of negative thought meditated by intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century was to elaborate a counter-plan—the bourgeois—of the fundamentally irrational principle of architectural development. If, as Cacciari, the understanding of rationalism abandoned the intrinsic rationality of capitalism once under the govern- ment of market, the productive processes, the power of bourgeois theories such as John Maynard Keynes, and the desire to expand the way capitalist was to make its fundamental irrationality productive. This potentially productive approach to architectural development was the operative project that Tafuri elaborated in "La critica operativa", an enterprise that it shared theonly way to achieve critical intervention. For Cacciari, the tradition of negative thought understood as the ideological mediations produced by intel- lectuals, and for "architects as intellectual workers", was very clear. What was needed was, he contended, to seriously historicize the pro- cesses and forms through which the content of intellectual work was always structurally linked with the conditions posed by the evolution of political economy. It is precisely for this reason that Tafuri (as Fontana saw, in the activity of his his- torical inquiry precisely what the avant-gardes (and Cacciari in particular) had tried to do, the most powerful tool for questioning and interpreting the effects of capitalist development on the urban fabric. Indeed, these intellectual mentalities meant that the political role of intellectuals was not simply to replace the forms of its qualifications, its ways of being specialized and the way, in every cycle of produc- tion, capitalist ideology as an idea for the social role of intellectuals. For Tafuri, the logical task of moving to a new situation, to read any action, was supposed to provide a non- ideological form of understanding the possibili- ties for (intellectual) action. In this sense it is interesting to note how today, Tafuri's reflections come unexpectedly (and paradoxically) very close to, on the one hand, the neoliberal slogans such as "creative work" and "creative class", and on the other hand, the post-opus discus- sions about cognitive work as the center of the post-Fordist mode of production. But with these positions have completely accepted the productive status of knowledge, Tafuri focused on another perspective, the one that associates intellectuals with the cultural within capitalist development. This problematization was so radical that it might conclude that the true aim of Tafuri's critique was not so much the role of the intellectuals in the transformation of society, but the question of whether the critique was done within a project where what was at stake was not architecture as a discipline, but the possible relationship between cultural classes and struggle, that is to say to understand how political processes, the movements of the avant-gardes against which Tafuri rails can be attributed to a mis- understanding of the specific past at stake. The very least, they filter those past values through the present, without being able to acknowledge the autonomies. Of course, this nomenclature does this to some extent, Tafuri included. It is difficult to read his essay on Jacques Barzun da Vignola without writing a whole new book about French language of Marxist historiography, nor his historiographical traditions and his opposition to the use of reference to Fernández or to Freud in its structure and aims. The key difference between this fogging in Tafuri's writing and the goals of the operative historians is that Tafuri purports to hold himself aloof from interference with architectural production. His disciplinary ideology remains a problem of historical practice, but theoretically isolated from architectural practice and archi- tectural ideology. Whatever holes we can pick in Tafuri's position as it plays out in his own work, the schema offers an important theme of the historian's stance in architectural culture. A substantial aspect of the operative condition against which Tafuri rails can be attributed to a mis- understanding of the specific past at stake. 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terms, the possibility of transgressing the disci-  

plinary specializations and expertise imposed  

by the political economy of work and production.  

Tafuri demonstrated this transgression not in  

disrupting the professional world, but through  

the transdisciplinarity (two forms of intellectual  

work that Tafuri would have seen as the most  

advanced forms of ideological mystification  

within which capitalism administers cultural production)  

by the wide spectrum of his analyses that combined politics, aesthetics,  

poetic and architectural, and economy into one critical project  

aimed at defining the true terms of his Befreiung.

Note

1. Manfredo Tafuri, “Lavoro intellettuale e sviluppo capitale”, in Contropiano 1 (1969), 31–79. The first part of this article was published as the first chapter of Tafuri’s work under the title “Il ‘progetto storico’” in 1970, a work that applies both to historical knowledge and to the knowledge to the present, each constitute the  

2. “Più del capitale” was the title of a fundamental essay by Manfredo Tafuri published in 1970, in the Journal Quaderni. In this one, the Roman philosopher who wrote to stress a conflict on Tafuri’s project and analysis of architectural and urban historians attempts to understand the unfolding of the capitalist economy as a totality of history and force the architectural historian to deliver a “progetto storico” on which every historian can name the terms in which the history analyzes these genres of architectural history tending to  

3. The irony of this point is that the deeper Tafuri pursued the complexities of the past in his own research program, and the more that this work took him to those moments in the modern era that established an apparently greater degree of complexity, the less he worked was perceived by relevant current contemporary architects and architectural critics. However defined or named, the “crisis” state in which Tafuri argued for the re-configuration of critical practices in architectural culture is most evident in this phenomenon of his reception.

What some have termed Tafuri’s turn to history is nothing more, in this sense, than an accelerated program of historical practice along the lines of Tavère’s turn, following imperatives embedded in Tavere’s turn, all tempered by his acknowledgement of the blind spots of that youthful analysis. That this appears distant, without bridge, or irrelevant to the concerns of contemporary architectural practice and theory is a paradox of the turn’s legibility. The very roots of modern architectural culture and its relation to the present. This essay reworks the author’s contribu-  

Manfredo Tafuri and the Venice School

history’s capacity to diagnose this condition, these genres of architectural history tending to look identical on the surface. And these obstacles together prevent critical history from having a productive effect in architectural culture, acting as its conscience. In a more concrete terms the classic high noon showdown, Tafuri suggests that operative historiography is a go nowhere, as both play about the field and a critical historiography that’s ultimately concerned with destabilising the privileged status of architectural and urban historians. Tafuri’s project involves the wide spectrum of his analyses that combined politics, aesthetics, poetic and architectural, and economy into one critical project aimed at defining the true terms of his Befreiung as intellectual.

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Die Siemensstadt 1930, Anton Scheuritzel. From Siemens und die Siemensstadt, Siemens AG, Berlin 1999

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Matti Kallioinen
After the Future
3 sep–10 okt

Kristina Jansson
Echo Echo
15 okt–14 nov

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