

Architecture or Techno-utopia | POLITICS AFTER MODERNISM

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Introduction

THE (SECOND) MACHINE AGE AND AFTER

Ghosts in the Machine

Introducing the second edition of *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1980), Reyner Banham dated the end of the dominance of the "Modern Movement" and with it "The International Style" to the year 1970. Modern architecture, he conceded, was "now finally in disrepute." Although early twentieth-century modernism now appeared outmoded, even archaic—as "unserviceable as an old car with a fast-emptying fuel tank and no filling station in sight," like a "grand old vehicle . . . sputtering its way to the junkyard"—Banham suggested that, in principle, its utopian ideals retained a haunting relevance.¹ When *Theory and Design* first appeared in 1960, Banham's narrative of an architecture driven by technological advancement appeared to have a promising future: "Most of the beliefs on which the Modern Movement had been based were still standing and in good order," he recalled, "and what appeared to be a second machine age as glorious as the first beckoned us into the 'Fabulous Sixties'—miniaturization, transistorization, jet and rocket travel, wonder-drugs and new domestic chemistries, television and the computer seemed to offer more of the same, only better." Here again, in an updated coupling of humans and machines, the architect could seek the "power to deliver the promises of the Machine Age."²

But just as modernism had not delivered on its promises of happiness, that future too had not come to pass. Banham addressed this painful realization a few years earlier, in his melancholy epilogue to *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (1976). While megastructures and other experimental practices of the 1960s embraced the period's libertarian sentiments and the "belief in the permissive and the open-ended, in a future with 'alternative scenarios,'" it had soon become apparent (not only to Banham, but also to architects) that the work harbored a paradoxical call to order, an atavistic alliance with modernist dreams of a totalizing environmental control. This "urge to impose a simple and architectonic order on the layout of human society and its equipment" was "autodestructive," Banham concluded; it contained an "inner contradiction that could not be resolved."⁴ If initially, as with modernism, the use of a massive scale had been identified with leftist politics, those efficiencies of scale, as it

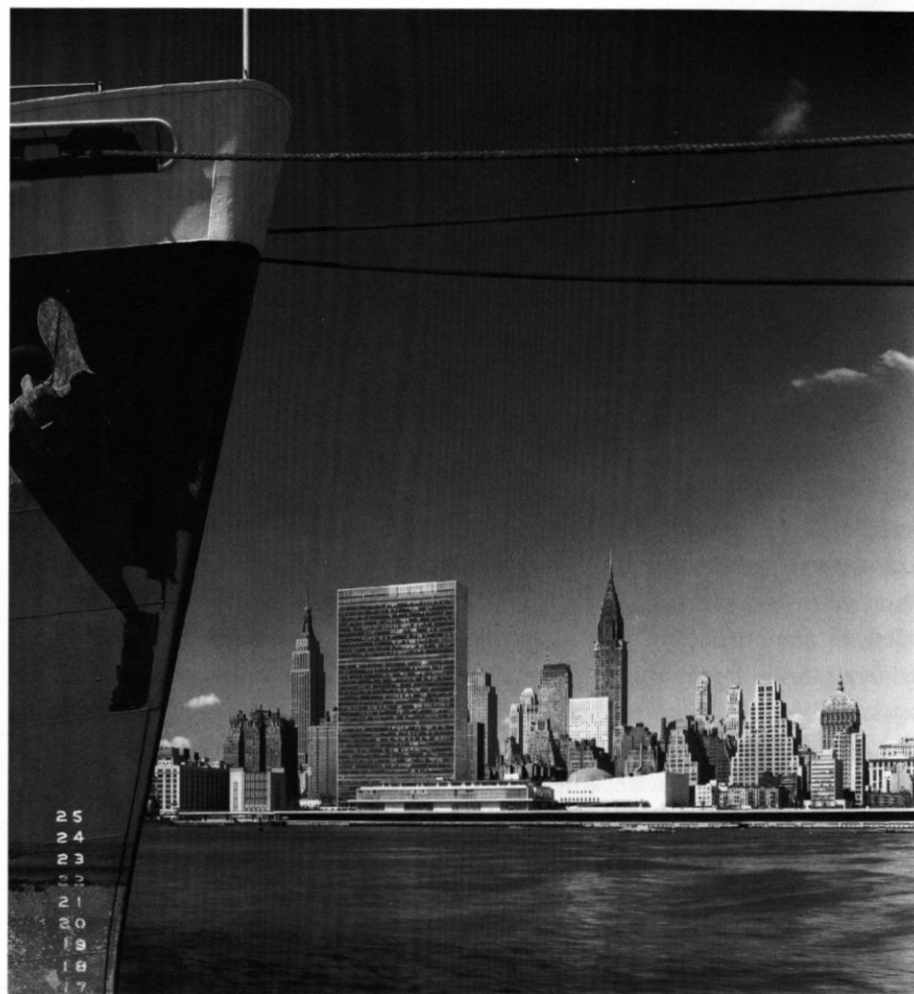
turned out, served capitalism all too well; and the flexibility sought within the megastructure's systematic "permissiveness" further accorded with the transforming nature of post-Fordist capitalism and its institutions—with "Big Management" and the "organs of established power." Thus, despite attempts to forge what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have termed "lines of flight" from techniques of power operative within the contemporary milieu, megastructures had merely opened the way for the "Establishment [who] got in, enjoying for the moment an illusory afterglow of assumed radicalism."⁵ The loss of the promise of a "flexible city of the future" was profoundly disenchanting.

Architecture or Techno-utopia: Politics after Modernism investigates the historical dynamics both of the demise of modernism and of its experimental endgames that flourished in the late 1960s and early '70s; it traces, in Banham's words, their "fall from grace." My aim is not, however, to shore up narratives of decline, failure, and finality, nor to reiterate the codification of postmodernism they so effectively served. Quite the contrary. The book sets out to recover hidden disparities and pluralities from within the histories of these architectural practices, not to recuperate them for the present (indeed they are of a different historical moment),⁶ but to recast the critical and political stakes informing their legacy. To do so, it charts a course through American architecture's engagement with the aesthetic, social, and political ramifications of technological change, offering a counterhistory of practices and institutions that attempted, in various ways and with varying degrees of success and visibility, to advance ethical and political prospects for the discipline, in spite of the waning efficacy of modernist convictions and historical avant-garde strategies. This is a very particular and necessarily incomplete trajectory (many other stories could be told), focusing on work—buildings, conceptual projects, exhibitions, publications, symposia, or agitprop performances—that implicitly or explicitly refused the position of either melancholic fatalism or uncritical techno-optimism in order to articulate a politicized response, no matter how ill-fated these struggles might appear, and no matter how far from mainstream practice they strayed or how close to it they came in order to stage their battles. Indeed, it is a wager of this study that precisely amid what seem to be the most monolithic of institutions (such as New York's Museum of Modern Art and even the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies) one can locate fault lines and moments of dissensus that, though failing to produce radical transformations, warrant analysis for the nature of the debates and knowledges to which they gave rise. As a counterpart to the mainstream, this book directs attention to marginal practices such as dome-building and intermedia installations that pushed the discipline to its limits, demonstrating a type of porosity or permeability—to new materials, alternative economies, social transformations, and other

media—that can be understood, at least in retrospect, as contemporaneous openings to new aesthetic and political genealogies.

Questioning of modernism was of course nothing new; from New Monumentality, Neo-Liberty, and the multifaceted work of Team 10 to practices that embraced systems theory, cybernetics, and the behavioral and social sciences, earlier codifications of modern architecture had been repeatedly challenged throughout the decades following the Second World War. Yet after the burgeoning experimentation with new technologies and new social subjectivities in the 1960s, the '70s marked a watershed and a distinctly postutopian turn. As disenchantment grew with the capacity of recent strategies to effect structural change—from megastructures, domes, and "environmental design" to inflatables and student insurrections—critical and/or utopian vocations for architecture began to seem not only idealistic but, as Banham observed, even impossibly foreclosed. Not unrelated were claims that not only modernism and the avant-garde were coming to an end but architecture itself was under threat. Experimental and radical practices were cast in such narratives as indications of a discipline spinning out of control, producing strategies straying too far from architecture's traditional demarcations. The response, as this book will argue, was a call to order under the rubric of "postmodernism," a defensive re-demarcation, or reterritorialization, of disciplinary boundaries aiming to control such trajectories, to render architecture once again recognizable. It was a response very much haunted by those alternate practices and carefully constructed and promoted in a battle against the discipline's permeability to, and coupling with, emergent historical forces. Concentrating primarily on the pivotal decades of the 1960s and '70s, *Architecture or Techno-utopia* returns to this embattled moment to read familiar historical narratives and landmark events in American architecture against the grain.

Banham is only a minor (if recurrent) protagonist within this book, but his response to the looming sense of the discipline's foreclosure to politically informed experimentations with technology, and to the postmodern turn that came in its wake, stands as a particularly insightful if troubled one. I want to begin briefly with Banham, then, and ask what circumstances could have led such an optimistic critic, one so thoroughly invested in articulating architecture's prospects for engaging new technologies and new social subjectivities, to undergo such an about-face?⁷ It is important to recall that Banham had moved from England to the United States in 1976, having been a frequent visitor since 1968, when he was appointed advisor to the Board of the International Design Conference at Aspen (IDCA).⁸ But the America he found was very different from the industrial landscape and economy that had inspired the first generation of modern architects, as he recounted in *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building*



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United Nations Headquarters,
New York. Architect: Harrison &
Abramovitz. Photograph © Ezra
Stoller/Esto.

and *European Modern Architecture*.⁹ It was an America rocketing into the space age and computerization, while embroiled in an imperialist war in Southeast Asia and in what was frequently (if not entirely accurately) characterized as civil war at home, with the radicalization of protest movements and the counterculture. It was an America at once expanding its military and corporate interests globally while experiencing what Herbert Marcuse termed the "Great Refusal" by the nation's youth. Banham would find much of this refusal counterproductive, referring somewhat facetiously to "the flower children, the dropouts of the desert communes, the politicized squatters . . . the Marcusians, the art-school radicals and the participants in the street democracies of the *événements de Mai*," and soon turned to the deserts of the American Southwest in search of a less troubled modernist experience.¹⁰

Banham's liberal, somewhat traditional leftist ideology—like both the early modernism and the megastructures that initially seemed to express it so well—had come to represent, in the first instance, something close to "liberal-capitalist oppression" according to the ideals of a new generation of radical thought.¹¹ (Including, we might note, many who had fled to the American Southwest.) And, in the second instance, from the perspective of many postmodern formulations, the British critic's fascination with the machine would be dismissible as naive techno-optimism, a trenchant adherence to modernist idealism that was out of touch with both the realities of American capitalism and the return to "Architecture."

Despite his melancholic tone, Banham's revisiting of earlier musings on modernism and experimental practice suggested other possibilities latent within his historical project. Among his many insights was the recognition that those histories had other stories to tell, perhaps other futures to beckon. In recasting the second edition of *Theory and Design*, he argued that although postmodernists found modern buildings "so wanting in symbolic and decorative values," it was "worth remembering that this was not how it started out."¹² If the work was understood to be historically outmoded, it nevertheless harbored potentials for redemption, as did its legacy. It seemed to carry what Walter Benjamin so provocatively referred to as a "secret index" or "weak messianic power" carried by the past.¹³

It was in this context that Banham reflected on the United Nations Headquarters in New York and in so doing indicated the complexity of such retrievals. As he argued, the UN had "cemented" modernism's aspirations into a "permanent symbolic monument"; it had "summed up all those aspirations toward liberal social amelioration, institutionalized caring for the oppressed and underprivileged, and progress through technology, that had inspired the Pioneers, Founders and Masters of the Modern Movement, their followers and their pupils." While his description to this point simply rehearsed modernist mythology, implying determinate relations between form, program, and

political ideology, his motivation was not nostalgia. He sought, rather, to dissipate those very myths. As he went on, "in practice, the U.N. has all too often served as an instrument of Big Power politics and of grinding bureaucratic routinism"; the modern architecture that it "canonized" had come to stand for a global "architecture of anonymous corporate domination."¹⁴ This story of modernism's congealing into a mode of representation suitable for cooptation and reterritorialization by capital was not unique, as indicated above. But the implications of his story did not end here.

Banham in fact never expanded on the larger political ramifications of his architectural example, but his invocation of the UN headquarters could hardly have been incidental to thinking about architecture and politics after the first machine age. Beyond the question of meaning, of what the buildings signified, it points to the complex intertwining of historical factors underlying my own interest in revisiting modernist endgames. Founded after the Second World War, the UN, as an institution, functioned "as a hinge in the genealogy from international to global juridical structures,"¹⁵ implicitly registering a crisis in notions of political sovereignty and borders. Thus, Banham had resituated his assessment of the techno-utopian aspiration of modernism into the context of the discipline's role, witting or unwitting, within emergent techniques of supranational power—not just juridical but also economic, social, military, territorial, and geopolitical. That is, he brought the discipline into a dialog with forces that challenged its very jurisdiction and the Enlightenment faith upon which it had been founded. Just as the notion of an international political order founded in the sovereign rights of nation-states had ceded to a postnational condition (hence the need for new institutional frameworks and new formulations of rights and of citizenship), the disciplinary frameworks and ideological certainties of industrial modernism were severely contested by this encounter with the postindustrial, postmodern forces of globalization. Architecture too needed to rethink its very parameters.

To come back, then, to Banham's historical project: Banham insisted that contemporary buildings retained earlier prospects of engaging technology in the service of progressive ideals, noting that "imprisoned" within the "inexpressive towers of glass" now spreading globally were "romantic dreams of prismatic crystalline splendours, cathedrals of light and colour." These dreams of a better world, he posited, were "the true 'ghosts in the machine' of the Twentieth Century, faint echoes of a far from faint-hearted epoch when men truly tried to come to terms with 'the Machine' as a power to liberate men from ancient servitudes to work and exploitation."¹⁶ Banham titled his new introduction "The Machine Age and After," hoping those ghosts might continue to haunt the discipline and its conception of the coupling of bodies and machines. We might add to this, over a quarter century later, the question of how other, perhaps slightly different ghosts might become visible through historical research—subjugated

ghosts from the early experimental period of the discipline's engagement with the logics of information technology. And these might be not only progressive but also radical and revolutionary ghosts from another dream world, whose insurrection might render uncanny the seeming foreclosure of such politics with the rise of postmodernism in the early 1970s.

Postmodernism

In many regards *Architecture or Techno-utopia* explores the emergence of postmodernism in the late 1960s and early '70s, but as should be evident, it addresses only obliquely what has come to be known as postmodernism in architecture as well as what stands as the legacy of the discipline within larger postmodern debates. If this book aims to decenter, even to dissipate familiar narratives of postmodernism—such as those codified so effectively by Charles Jencks and Robert Stern or critiqued by Manfredo Tafuri—by articulating alternate genealogies, it does so through self-conscious proximity to those narratives. In dialog with but departing from accounts of the semantic and historicist turn that dominated much of architectural practice from the 1970s onward, a large portion of the book probes the impact within the discipline of information technologies and their specific discourses and languages. The project is to trace, in the formulation of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "the passage of postmodernization," a historical passage articulated not only in the technological realm—as industrial technology ceded to its postindustrial or informatic counterpart—but also, and inextricably, in the socioeconomic, cultural, and political realms. In contrast to the many narratives of loss and decline, Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, informed by the extraparliamentary left in Italy (for which Negri was, and remains, a central figure), reads such forces of technological transformation as spawning potentially positive aesthetic, social, material, and political formations. It is an important lesson for architecture, and this present volume aims to put the discipline into an ongoing dialog with this paradigm, both by identifying moments of their historical intersection in the United States and by proposing its continuing efficacy as critical and theoretical tools.

To set out the stakes of architecture's encounter with this historical passage and its critical reappraisal, the book begins firmly in modernism: a study of the architectural criticism of Meyer Schapiro demonstrates a discourse related not only to the aesthetic realm, but to the technological, socioeconomic, and political imperatives of his era. In texts published in small radical publications and addressing subjects such as MoMA's International Style, R. Buckminster Fuller, Lewis Mumford, and Frank Lloyd Wright, Schapiro recognized, as early as the 1930s, a dialectic of architecture's autonomy versus its technocratic yielding to capitalist imperatives that would return, in updated

guise, in the polemical postmodern debate of the "Grays versus Whites." Although far from visible, and never integrated in the mainstream reception of modernism, Schapiro's writings warrant revisiting because of their insistence on tracing architecture's radical political potentials—that is, for their optimism. This lesson was quickly forgotten, and stands in distinct contrast to later Marxist criticism such as that of Tafuri. Tafuri's prescient yet despondent reading of architecture's prospects under capitalism, his recognition that avant-garde strategies of resistance and negation had come increasingly to serve the very machinations of an ever more totalizing capitalism, forms a stark contrast to Schapiro's earlier hopefulness. To Tafuri, as we will explore in chapter 2, the variegated response by architects to late capitalism in the 1960s and '70s all fell into the same trap: experimental architecture's engagement of postindustrial technology, the withdrawal into formal languages on the part of the "Whites," and the "pluralist" aesthetic of the "Grays," were all equally "repatriated" into an ever more differentiated capitalist market.

Tafuri's work had a profound impact on the discourse of American architecture. Equally "operative" were the discourses of Colin Rowe and Banham's own student Charles Jencks, who in different ways throughout the seventies perpetuated a focus on formalist and semantic investigations at the expense of political engagements with technology and new social movements. Jencks famously announced the death of modernism in *The Language of Post-modern Architecture* (1977), dating it summarily, if rhetorically, to the destruction of Minoru Yamasaki's Pruitt-Igoe housing from the 1950s at 3:32 PM, July 15, 1972.¹⁷ His account of a scenographic and historicist postmodernism that had arisen to replace the ruins of modernism helped launch the discipline into a historical amnesia of its recent past. That Jencks's own historical project would require such forgetfulness was perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in his removing from subsequent editions of *Architecture Today* an insightful section written by William Chaitkin and dedicated to "Alternatives." Chaitkin's remarkable account of "Funk" architecture, from dome-building and garbage-housing to the work of Ant Farm, had pointed to the pressures of its publication context, noting both the "Post-Modern style, which rapidly became a new orthodoxy in the seventies" and the manipulation of modernist language disarticulated from its "technological roots."¹⁸ Equally fascinating was Jencks's decision in 2000 to republish his 1969 text on experimental practices, *Architecture 2000: Predictions and Methods*, complete with rather comical claims to the success of his futurology. While this return was seemingly facilitated by formal resonances between experimental work from the '60s and recent computer-generated form, we need nonetheless to question the politics of history at work here.¹⁹ Jencks would even update the most recent edition of *The Language of Post-modern Architecture* to complete the circle,²⁰ performing a "reannexation" or "recolonization" of once suppressed work into a



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Ant Farm (Chip Lord), *Real(C)ity* study, c. 1970. Photocollage. University of California, Berkeley Art Museum. Purchase made possible through a gift from Therese Bonney and partial gift of Chip Lord and Curtis Schreier.

unitary narrative. And to distinguish such a "return" from the "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" set out by Michel Foucault's notion of archaeology, we might note that what is lost is precisely those "dividing lines in the confrontations and struggles that functional arrangements or systematic organizations are designed to mask."²¹ These demarcations are in turn what historical scholarship seeks to reveal.

Tafuri's melancholic response was informed by the legacy of recent history, from the inability of revolutionary strategies to produce sustainable democratic social institutions to the undreamed of violence perpetrated by fascism and in the name of nationalism. As famously articulated by Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Enlightenment rationality had revealed its dialectical counterpart as a violent subjection that seemingly knew no bounds.²² Moreover, if the memory of the Russian Revolution and earlier twentieth-century avant-garde practices had given hope to utopian and radical formulations—a memory still in some senses alive in the immediate postwar period—the horrors of World War II, so fully grounded in technological advancement, came to seem inextricable from other, disastrous, lessons of modernization.

For many critics, moreover, the insurrectionaries of the 1960s had, like those earlier avant-gardists, inadequately understood the machinations of capitalism. The worker and student uprisings (during which Adorno notoriously remained in his classroom), the civil rights movement and struggles for liberation from colonial rule, the proliferation of an American counterculture against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, and the rise of environmental and ecological consciousness and new social movements all seemed simply to be failed projects; all could be too easily subsumed within the ever more differentiated logic of capitalism. This suspicion was only exacerbated during the postmodern turn via the market's immediate and cynical recuperation of notions of pluralism and identity (think not only of Jencks's postmodernism but of Benetton and Gap), and by the accelerated eradication of social programs under the neoliberal policies of the Thatcher and Reagan years (and beyond).²³

Missing from this disheartening picture, then, is any mode of critical optimism such as that forged by Schapiro for modernism and the historical avant-garde.²⁴ But if we consider again this insurrectionary moment in the context of postmodernism, we find not only the melancholy response of the traditional left and neoconservative responses such as that of Daniel Bell (with his announcement of the end of history and of politics), but also critical and political paradigms including poststructuralism and the *Autonomia* movement of the Italian New Left. Poststructuralism has been important to theoretical debates in architecture for a number of decades; the post-Marxist paradigm of the Italian New Left has only recently been gaining attention with the phenomenal reception of Hardt and Negri's *Empire*.²⁵ To refuse the dualism of melan-

choly versus uncritical techno-optimism, I want to adopt a central lesson from these interconnected theoretical lineages: capitalism can be understood to resolve all contradictions only if we continue to regard the dialectic itself as the sole mechanism of historical transformation. If we do not, other (positive) prospects arise within that passage of postmodernization, and it is these prospects, and the new modes of social and political subjectivity they subtend, that this book aims to trace within architecture.

To briefly indicate its remaining content, the book analyzes Arthur Drexler's curatorial work at MoMA addressing the impact of information technology on architecture and design (chapter 3); Emilio Ambasz's importation into MoMA of debates on environmental design and information technology, as well as European critical theory and Italian radical practices (chapters 4 and 5); the counterculture's paradoxical embrace of Buckminster Fuller's technocratic inventions as the architecture of a new revolutionary society (chapter 6); psychedelic and intermedia environments, such as the work of the USCO group, and the relation of their fluid aesthetic tropes to an emerging one-world ideology (chapter 7); and the politics of the ecology movement and its relation to an increasingly militarized environment, read through the media-based work of Ant Farm (chapter 8). The book ends with a consideration of the contemporary recuperation of experimental practices, as exemplified in the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's competition for the reconstruction of the World Trade Center, and the elision of historical memory this entailed. Important here is a study of Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis's 1972 *Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*, which stands as a reflexive counterpoint to contemporary work (chapter 9).

A Different Kind of Borderline

One recurring theme of this study concerns the nature and vicissitudes of architecture's relation to its historical moment, particularly with respect to the domains of technology, politics, economics, aesthetics, theory, and emergent forms of life. I have attempted to identify a sort of permeability to such historical contingencies, both in the sense of their being always already inscribed within architectural practices, and in the sense of a critical openness to them that spawns positive effects. This is explored at once in the formal, material, and programmatic registers, as well as in the discursive and institutional realms.²⁶ To reiterate, it is along these lines that I want to refute claims that such openness poses an untoward threat to architecture's specificity, as a discipline and as a medium. For it is precisely the critical negotiation of disciplinary conventions with the forces revealed by these encounters that, I believe, forms one of the keys to the discipline's purchase both on contemporary life and on potentials for radical transformations, no matter how quickly other forces arise to shut these down.

In this regard, I hope the book serves as a contribution to theorizations of relations between aesthetics and politics, to the project of asking what a progressive or radical practice might look like in architecture, or of identifying where it might have taken place following the emergence in late capitalism of dispersed and ever more variegated modalities of power and control.

At stake then is not asking where disciplinary boundaries are to be drawn but, in the words of Samuel Weber, "tracing a *different kind of borderline*."²⁷ What has supplanted attempts to demarcate disciplinary domains and the search for foundations, he argues, is "a more practical, strategic approach involving an effort to extend or otherwise put into play what could be described as *enabling limits*."²⁸ Distinguishing an "institution" that maintains the status quo (sometimes through a violent arrestation)²⁹ from "institutionalization" as "its dynamic transformative aspect," Weber articulated a relation to an ever-present if disturbing alterity that allowed a discipline to "set itself apart."³⁰ An important lesson here is that the issue in any polemical battle is not the reconciliation or opposition of positions but the recognition that one could radically destabilize the other; that such a dynamic could function as a mode of spacing through which a discipline "set itself apart."

For Tafuri, poststructuralism offered an inadequate set of tools for articulating relations between signifying practices and techniques of power. Although he acknowledged their efficacy in constructing "fascinating genealogies" of language and systems of power, for the Marxist critic the plurality of readings poststructuralism entailed meant that writers "must necessarily negate the existence of the *historic space*."³¹ What I want to argue, instead, is that it is precisely in marking such plurality and spacings that genealogies of architectural practices—at least those open to a critical engagement with contingent forces and hence to a broader social, technical, and political matrix—can reveal the very contours of a new type of historical space.

The "or" in my title—which aims to recall Le Corbusier's famous dictum, "Architecture or Revolution"—is a rhetorical one: this book sets out to undermine such oppositions by identifying more complex or nuanced encounters between architecture and new technologies, ones retaining an ethico-political vocation for the discipline. The examples introduced here are not, of course, always "successful" in this regard. But they do serve, in different ways, to reveal the contours of other modes of engagement and negotiation. The task of historical analysis is understood to have the potential to trace these alternatives—roads marked out, if not necessarily traveled down. The aim is to identify aesthetic, theoretical, and political topoi, no matter how buried by the victors of history, or how incidental they might seem, that question the disassociation of architecture from both its historical and political context as well as from its dreams of a better world to come.

Notes

Introduction: The (Second) Machine Age and After

- 1 P. Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1980), 9, 10.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 10, 11.
- 3 Reyner Banham, *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 197.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 199 and 216, respectively.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 209, 208. A "line of flight" refers to a movement of deterritorialization or destratification of codified systems or techniques of power, which might take many forms. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
- 6 If the programs and sociopolitical ideals of architectural modernism had emerged in response to industrialization—an earlier phase of technology and capitalism—at stake is understanding how architecture in turn responded to the conjunction of information technology and the socioeconomic forces of late capitalism.
- 7 On Banham's remarkable reformulation of architecture in the face of new technology, see Anthony Vidler, "Toward a Theory of Architectural Program," *October* 106 (Fall 2003): 59–74.
- 8 See Nigel Whiteley, *Reyner Banham: Historian of the Immediate Future* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).
- 9 See Reyner Banham, *A Concrete Atlantis: U.S. Industrial Building and European Modern Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986).
- 10 Banham, *Megastructure*, 209. I also address Banham's turn away from megastructure in my essay on the work of Julie Ault and Martin Beck, "Infinite Rumors," in *Installation* (Vienna: Secession, 2006). See also Martin Beck, *an Exhibit viewed, played, populated* (Graz/Frankfurt: Kunstverein Graz/Revolver Verlag, 2005). On the notion of the "Great Refusal" see Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).
- 11 Banham acknowledged a critique which, as he explained, came not from "the established and organized Left, but was put to [him], appropriately enough, by dissident Parisian students on the second night of the *événements de Mai* in 1968." This was a neo-Marxist critique in line with Herbert Marcuse that recognized in the "permissive freedom" of megastructure an affinity with the illusory sense of "the consumers' supposed choices between different products offered by the capitalist system's supermarkets." Banham, *Megastructure*, 206.
- 12 Banham, *Theory and Design*, 9.
- 13 Benjamin's "historical objects" were constellations of resonant moments "blasted" from the past, a resonance born not of affinities of form and content but of historical circumstances that endowed them with redemptive potential, a "revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past." Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History" (1940), in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*,

Volume 4: 1938–1940, ed. Michael W. Jennings and Howard Eiland, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 390, 396.

- 14 Banham, *Theory and Design*, 9.
- 15 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 4.
- 16 Banham, *Theory and Design*, 12.
- 17 Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977), 9.
- 18 William Chaitkin, "The Alternative," in Charles Jencks, *Architecture Today* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1982), 297. My thanks to Chip Lord for alerting me to Chaitkin's insightful and detailed account (and its suppression).
- 19 Charles Jencks, *Architecture 2000 and Beyond: Success in the Art of Prediction* (West Sussex: Wiley-Academy, 2000), which opens with computer renderings of Greg Lynn's Embryonic House of 1999.
- 20 Charles Jencks, *The New Paradigm in Architecture: The Language of Postmodernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
- 21 See Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 7.
- 22 Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1969).
- 23 The impact within architecture of this conservative political turn in the 1980s is addressed in Mary McLeod, "Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism," *Assemblage* 8 (February 1989): 23–61. McLeod was part of Revisions, a group of New York architects and critics, founded in the spring 1981 to redress the disarticulation of architecture from politics as manifest in postmodernism—through the replacement of modernist social objectives with postmodern scenographic strategies—as well as in the issue-oriented social criticism of the early 1960s (Jane Jacobs), and the formal, semiotic, and phenomenological concerns of the early 1970s (Colin Rowe, Charles Jencks, Mario Gandelsonas, and Christian Norberg-Schulz). In March 1982, Revisions organized a conference at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies entitled "Architecture and Ideology." The event, which along with Revisions members included Manfredo Tafuri and Fredric Jameson, was aimed specifically at "the introjection of an ideological argument into the current architectural debate." It was published as *Architecture Criticism Ideology*, ed. Joan Ockman, Mary McLeod, and Deborah Berke (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1985). In her introduction McLeod situated Robert Stern as exemplary of the "movement's conservative political associations." Postmodernism, he had argued, "is not revolutionary in either the political or artistic sense; in fact, it reinforces the effect of the technocratic and bureaucratic society in which we live" (cited on page 8). My own study returns to address these problematics, from the perspective of over two decades later. I want both to acknowledge these earlier interventions and to offer a response to the question of the presence of a Marxist critique of architecture through retrieving Schapiro's little-known writings from the 1930s.
- 24 I want to distinguish this optimism from that of writers like Jencks and Fuller, whose optimism was hardly critical.
- 25 See Sylvère Lotringer, "Autonomia's Multitudes," *Pataphysics* (Holiday Resort issue) (2003). Lotringer also points out the close connection of Negri to Deleuze and Guattari during his exile years in Paris.
- 26 Such forms of negotiation must be distinguished from the uncritical naturalization of technology and practices that attempt to assimilate their very logic and functioning to emergent forces driv-

ing the "new economy," as found in contemporary practice identified with the refusal of theory and the term "postcriticality." For in this line of contemporary practice there is no articulated moment of what Paolo Virno has called "a free-thinking inventiveness that changes the rules of the game and disorients the enemy," no sense of the possibility of "intemperance" or "disobedience," either as it might operate at the individual level or at that forged critically and collectively through new social formations. See Paolo Virno, "Virtuosity and Revolution: The Political Theory of Exodus," in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 189–210.

- 27 Samuel Weber, *Institution and Interpretation*, expanded ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 213.
- 28 *Ibid.*, x. Weber is in dialog here with Gaston Bachelard.
- 29 *Ibid.*, xiv.
- 30 *Ibid.*, xv.
- 31 Manfredo Tafuri, "Introduction: The Historical 'Project,'" in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trans. Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 9.

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- 1 Alfred H. Barr, preface to Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (1932; New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), 29. See also *Modern Architecture—International Exhibition*, ed. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, and Lewis Mumford (New York: Museum of Modern Art and W. W. Norton, 1932); Beatriz Colomina, "Museum," in *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994); and Terence Riley, *The International Style: Exhibition 15 and the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Rizzoli/Columbia Books on Architecture, 1992).
- 2 John Kwait (pseud.), "The New Architecture," *New Masses* (May 1932): 23; reprinted in Meyer Schapiro, "Looking Forward to Looking Backward: A Dossier of Writings on Architecture from the 1930s," ed. Felicity D. Scott, *Grey Room* 06 (Winter 2002): 67–70 (henceforth cited as *Grey Room* dossier). All quotations within this section, unless otherwise noted, are from this text in the dossier.
- 3 Mumford, cited in Schapiro, "The New Architecture," 69. Mumford's comments were transcribed slightly differently in the publication of the symposium. After recounting a conversation with Patrick Geddes, in which Geddes had suggested to regional planners that "they should plan New York as though they were working for a labor government," Mumford continued, "I have a similar message for the architects who wish to design the houses we will need, in vast quantities, in the near future; and that is, you must plan them as though you were working for a communist government." See Lewis Mumford in "Symposium: The International Architectural Exhibition," *Shelter* 2, no. 3 (April 1932): 4. While Schapiro suggests that newspapers did not report this aspect of the symposium, the *New York Times* did in fact mention Mumford's remarks. See "Calls the Drive 'Potential Slum,'" *New York Times*, February 20, 1932, 10.
- 4 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "Architectural Criticism," *Shelter* 2, no. 3 (April 1932), 2.
- 5 Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells (London: Architectural Press, 1946), 269.
- 6 See Henry Churchill, "Structural Study Associates," *Shelter* 2, no. 4 (May 1932): 3.