

*OASE* 44 is entitled 'Venetian perspectives'. This issue was put together – by Dirk van den Heuvel and myself – in response to the passing of Manfredo Tafuri in 1994. Alongside Dal Co and Cacciari, Tafuri was the main proponent of the so-called 'Venetian School', a group of architecture historians associated with the IUAV. The historical scrutiny of these Venetians derived its impetus from the intellectual sources of neo-Marxist and post-Marxist thought, such as the Frankfurt School, Benjamin, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Foucault. In other words, predominantly philosophical sources, imbuing the historical work with a critical dimension that yielded an extraordinarily rich and profound output of architecture historiography.

For many years, intellectually voracious architecture students at Delft University of Technology found inspiration in the work of Tafuri in particular (translations of *Teorie e storia* and *Progetto e utopia* circulated during the 1970s and 1980s). The Venetian philosophy thus constituted standard baggage for many members of the *OASE* editorial team (the bulk of whom had links with this degree programme).

*OASE* 44 features articles by Tafuri and Cacciari (including his beautiful oration given at Tafuri's funeral), and commentaries by the Dutch/Flemish authors Hilde Heyen and Michel J. van Nieuwstadt. The latter's contribution is reprinted here. Writer and translator Van Nieuwstadt is extremely well-versed in the Venetian School's intellectual sources, especially Nietzsche's oeuvre. Van Nieuwstadt reviews the English edition of Cacciari's 1993 book 'Architecture and Nihilism'. This book revolves around the Nietzschean concept of 'complete nihilism', which Cacciari sums up quite pithily as a critique of the greatest dogma of our time, namely that everything is relative and interchangeable (goods, products, fashions). In short, it is a critique of the eulogy on the 'death of the ideology'. This dogma symbolises the world of the modern metropolis, the city without

qualities. As such, the metropolis serves as the central allegory in Cacciari's book.

Tafuri's death seems to have heralded the demise of critical thought in architecture. After all, the closing decade of the twentieth century was characterised by the pragmatism of supermodernism. Likewise, the field of architecture theory seems to have turned into an autonomous, hermetic cultural-philosophical 'discourse' that has lost sight of its true object – architecture. Perhaps Nietzsche was too naïve and optimistic in thinking that man may ultimately conquer nihilism.

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from *OASE* 39 to 52

*Translated by Laura Vroomen*