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***L'histoire assassinée. Manfredo Tafuri and the architecture of the present***

**Teresa Stoppani**  
**University of Greenwich, London**  
**tstoppani@gmail.com**

Teresa Stoppani is Senior Lecturer and director of the MA/MSc Architecture Programme at the University of Greenwich, and Visiting Lecturer in Histories and Theories at the Architectural Association London. She studied architecture at the Institute of Architecture of the University of Venice (IUAV) and holds a PhD in Architectural and Urban Design from the University of Florence. Recent publications include: 'Mapping. The Locus of the Project' (*Angelaki* 9/2, August 2004), 'The Reversible City: Exhibition(ism), Chorality and Tenderness' (C. Lindner (ed.), *Urban Space and Cityscapes*, Routledge 2006), 'Voyaging in Piranesi's Space' (*Haecceity Papers* 1/2, Spring 2006), 'Unfinished Business. The Historical Project after Manfredo Tafuri' (J. Rendell et al. (eds.), *Critical Architecture*, Routledge 2007). She is currently working on the book 'Paradigm Islands: Manhattan and Venice'.

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**A new attention**

In recent years the work of Italian architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri has attracted a lot of interest in the world of architectural theory and practice. After the publications that celebrated Tafuri's work immediately after his demise in 1994 - most notably, *Casabella's* 'The Historical Project of Manfredo Tafuri' (1995)<sup>i</sup> - or produced a first collective critical reconsideration of his legacy shortly thereafter - seminal, *ANY's* 'Being Manfredo Tafuri' (2000)<sup>ii</sup> -, the last few years have seen the publication of the English translation of Tafuri's last book on the Renaissance<sup>iii</sup> and of new studies on Tafuri's works,<sup>iv</sup> which in different ways have returned Tafuri's legacy to the forefront of the architectural debate.

The interest in Tafuri's work had never entirely died off. Beyond the immediate applications of Tafuri's historiographical method by his colleagues and students at the Department of Architectural History at the Institute of Architecture of the University of Venice (IUAV),<sup>v</sup> who continued his investigations in certain areas of research (for instance, the vast series of studies produced on the architecture of the Renaissance) and beyond the embracing of his critical 'historical project' in the ambit of recent architectural theory,<sup>vi</sup> Tafuri's work on history as an open project and on the crisis of the architectural discipline has remained a constant point of reference for architectural practice as well.

**Critical history**

The recent books on Tafuri address – albeit partly and indirectly – the issue of a reconsideration of Tafuri's work not only in terms of its relation with the history of a remote architectural past (the Renaissance of his late studies), but also in the ever difficult relationship with the history of the present of the discipline. The theme of the history of the present, and particularly the relationship of history with the present of the architectural project is the main focus of Tafuri's early writings. In texts that range from *Theories and History of Architecture* (Teorie e storia dell'architettura, 1968), to *Architecture and Utopia* (Progetto e utopia, 1973) to *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (La sfera e il labirinto, 1980)<sup>vii</sup> Tafuri redefines the role and the method of architectural history as a history whose 'project' is a never-ending, open and self-questioning process rather than a finite and defining story. Tafuri wants the 'historical project'<sup>viii</sup> to be separate and distanced from the project of architectural design, but only in order to provide the tools to return, independently, to the architectural project with a critical analysis. It is in this sense that Tafuri provocatively declares that criticism does not exist and only history does:<sup>ix</sup> his history is necessarily critical and can only be critical; on the other hand, a criticism without history, without the analytical tools and the distance of history, does not exist, can not be critical.

**History of the present**

Tafuri's work in historiography leaves behind the crucial legacy of the definition, through an argued and structured provocation, of a history of architecture that is both differentiated from the history of art and detached from the project of architecture. Situated in the difficult space of this distance, the history of architecture thus redefined is precariously constructed as an autonomous and yet always compromised discourse that proceeds in parallel with architecture, and is also, like architecture itself, open and exposed to the forces of 'multiple techniques of environmental formation.'<sup>x</sup> The crucial test of this history (and indeed of all histories) takes place in its relation to the present. This is an issue that Tafuri addresses mainly in his earlier works, preferring to devote the later part of his career to the research and investigation of particular moments of architecture's more distant past. And yet, even when the objects of Tafuri's research are those of a remote past, they are never quiet

and appeased objects, but always complex scenarios of crisis, breaking points, sites of ambiguities, moments of shifts in mentalities and in power relations. The history of these moments remains open, bearing questions and unresolved problems that find echoes in the present, and that the present needs to address. The present in relation to Tafuri's work is then a complex and complicated system of relationships rather than a singular and circumscribed moment. It is the present of his contemporaries, architects and historians that operated at the time when Tafuri was defining his 'historical project'; it is the present of the effects of the crisis of Modernism on contemporary architecture; it is also the present of the crisis of the architectural language, within the definition of a long modernity that finds its roots in the Renaissance and in its manipulations of classical languages; it is – finally but not conclusively - the present in-progress of the evolving definition of the 'historical project' itself. For these reasons, for its openness to both the past and the future, the 'historical project' remains a present issue and a work to be continued. The recently published works that return Tafuri's writings to the present are important as a starting point for further reconsiderations of Tafuri's work and, more importantly, for a continuation of his project in the present.<sup>xi</sup>

### **History as research**

Tafuri's last book *Ricerca del Rinascimento* (1992) was recently published in English under the reductively rendered title of *Interpreting the Renaissance* (2006).<sup>xii</sup> The book is a specialist study of the complex relationships between the urban architecture of the Renaissance and its physical cultural and political contexts, and focuses in particular on the power systems that affect (then as they do now) architectural production. Relevant in Renaissance studies for its specificity and for its innovative interpretations of specific buildings, projects and urban environments, Tafuri's work confirms a method of constructing a history to which the present cannot be indifferent. In his methodological and critical preface Tafuri relates the formal research of the Renaissance to the more recent uncertainties and moments of experimentation of the modern avant-gardes, explicitly linking an 'unresolved past' to the 'unsettled present'.<sup>xiii</sup>

Tafuri's 'research' is twofold and bidirectional, tense and dynamic. Research is the architectural research that the Renaissance struggled through, a difficult, problematic, discordantly polyphonic, heterogeneous research that took on different religious political and architectural instances and progressed at different and uneven speeds. Research is the historical research ('project') conducted by the historian on a material that is still partly hidden, partly invisible, often ambiguous and susceptible of different interpretations; a research that does not restrict itself to the presentation of the past but links it to the present, addressing issues that remain topical today in the complexity of the political decision-making processes, and in the compromises, social implications, criticism and choices of languages that architecture always deals with, now as then. The past of Tafuri's Renaissance constantly challenges the present with its unresolved problems, unsettling the very role of the historical research on it. There is therefore a third level of research that is the true object of this book. Beyond the research conducted by the artists, architects, intellectuals, princes and politicians of the Renaissance, and beyond the research produced today by the historian on these events, contexts, projects and buildings, there exists a third level of an exquisitely Tafurian research on the tension that relates the two. This is a research on the discipline of architecture, a research on the reasons why it is necessary today (or fifteen years ago, when Tafuri's work was first published) to consider the architectural problem of the crisis of languages incubated in the Renaissance in order to understand the question of contemporary architecture<sup>xiv</sup> after the crisis of modernism.

### **History and the present**

Tafuri's relationship with the present - both in the definition of a historical methodology and in the critical work on his contemporaries - was recently analyzed by Marco Biraghi in *Progetto di crisi* (2005).<sup>xv</sup> The book is the first and partial attempt to produce a case-by-case reconsideration of

Tafuri's work in relation to his present, that is, to the critical voice of the architectural practice of the years when Tafuri was writing. Biraghi presents Tafuri as the critical historian of the present that works on architecture from within the discipline, while constantly producing the distance from design that the historical 'project' requires. Biraghi's approach is interesting because it is not limited to the analysis of Tafuri's critical work on a series of contemporary architects, but it also identifies possible influences that Tafuri would have shared with or derived from architectural practice. What emerges here is a Tafuri fully immersed in the present, more attentive and alert to the problems of his own time than the official visibility, diffusion and scientific relevance of his works on the Renaissance might suggest.

A similar attempt to put Tafuri's work in the context of contemporary architecture and its critical practices was produced in 2002 by Diane Ghirardo, with an essay that examines the influence of Tafuri's work on architectural theory and design research in the United States from the 1970s to the 1990s.<sup>xvi</sup> Rather than focusing on Tafuri's reading of certain architects, Ghirardo concentrates on the reception, appropriation and misunderstanding of Tafuri's thought by a few American architects. In the 1970s and 1980s Peter Eisenman and Daniel Libeskind developed a self-referential architecture independent from external values, a position that for Ghirardo represents a retreat from the architecture of political and ideological engagement that Tafuri had advocated in his historical and theoretical manifestoes: 'three decades of theoretical delirium in which poeticizing reflection passed for theory.'<sup>xvii</sup> When she refers to architectural theory, Ghirardo does not seem distinguish between texts and projects, considering a theory of architecture that is developed and proposed through texts and design proposals at the same time. The precedent to this position, as we will see, is to be found in Tafuri himself, in his 1968 work on the theories and history of architecture. In a way Ghirardo continues to acknowledge the existence, parallel to the historical discourse, of an operative criticism performed by architecture onto itself. The problem here is that the positions that Ghirardo analyses do not relate to Tafuri's work from a distance, through distinctions and oppositions, as had done the architectural research of the 1960s that Tafuri analyses, but take on Tafuri's positions and incorporate them in service of the architectural project.

### **'Architectural 'practice' and historical 'project'**

At this point is necessary to define what we mean here by architecture, before moving to a consideration of Tafuri's relation to the architecture of the present – his present, which spans from the 1960s to the early 1990s. We call here architectural 'practice' - to distinguish it from architectural history - the thinking, making and producing of architecture as a critical and self-reflective practice that may or may not be directly involved in or productive of the construction of physical environmental artefacts. In this sense, the practice of architecture at large is to be intended beyond the practical contingency of professional practice as a system of production. The two partially overlap but they do not coincide. Architectural practice, as inclusive of critical considerations (and reconsiderations) of its role in the making of space and in the definition (and redefinition) of its own languages, may often produce effects and shifts – as it did in the period which we consider here, from the late 1960s to the 1980s – that do not find immediate and direct application in the built environment, but occupy the space of the discipline and slowly filter through it, in time, changing and adapting it. Architectural practice thus defined is the space for the production of ideas in relation to design, for the experimentation of architectural languages, for the consideration of the role of architecture in the city and in society at large, for the constant questioning of architecture.

In relation to this space Tafuri's work occupied and still occupies a fundamental role, his historical 'project' uncomfortably offering an 'other' critical conscience that presents no solutions but raises questions and doubts, derived from a rigorously accurate and never appeased investigative attitude. Tafuri's is an investigation that continues to explore and challenge itself as well as its objects, thus constantly redefining its own role, questions and methods in the process. It is, for this reason and

for its very nature, an uncomfortable voice, always unsettling and challenging, never producing solutions but always interrogative and self-critical in its provisional and precarious constructs. It is, for Tafuri, as he clarifies in his early writings, not a form of ideological criticism, but a critique of ideology.<sup>xviii</sup> His is not a history that linearly narrates and supports a certain orientation, language or movement in architecture (what he calls ‘operative criticism’),<sup>xix</sup> but a problematic independent and open critical history that challenges both the past and the present. It is for this reason that his work, and especially those works in which he introduces, by consecutive adjustments, a method for the definition of an independent architectural history as a project (the ‘historical project’)<sup>xx</sup> remain an always uncomfortable and challenging voice for architectural practice.

### **A live(ly) debate: Tafuri and Rossi**

A multiple question opens up here. What is it of the historiographical and historical work of Tafuri – that is, his methodological definition and application of the ‘historical ‘project’) that *imports* to architectural practice? This question implies a mutual reactivity between Tafuri’s critical history on one hand and a critical architectural practice on the other. In other words, it asks: what of Tafuri’s work is important and relevant to architectural practice, what of it addresses and affects architectural practice from outside? It also asks: beyond influences and tense conversations, what of the method of history that Tafuri proposes as a project is imported and appropriated by architectural practice, often at the risk (as Ghirardo has shown) of distorting and voiding its message?

The answers to these questions remain beyond the scope of this paper and would require a series of articulated investigations. Here we consider only a specific moment of Tafuri’s complex relationship with contemporary architectural practice by focusing on Tafuri’s position as a critic and historian of the present on some aspects of the work of Aldo Rossi, who was his colleague at the Institute of Architecture of the University of Venice. Tafuri and Rossi operated in the same years, city and institution, inhabiting within the IUAV the very distant and different worlds of the Department of History of Architecture and the Department of Architectural Design. The departments and their protagonists in the period of time that runs from the late 1960s and throughout the 1980s are internationally known as the Venice School of Venice,<sup>xxi</sup> a wide spatio-temporal label that generally embraces all the different groups, positions and movements that inhabited the IUAV at the time, encompassing all the tensions, conflicts and mutual references, attacks and collaborations that animated the dialogue in the most intense and critically productive moment in the history of the Institute. In that context the relationship between the work of the ‘historical project’ on the present and the work of ‘architectural practice’ in the very same present was more active than ever. The object of history here was the present, and the architectural present replied and reacted to its contemporary critical history in the first person. ‘Architectural practice’ responded with its own tools – the image, the drawing, but also the text – to the provocations of critical history; history counterattacked with its words. Here the ‘historical project’ as interminable analysis engaged a difficult object that was not only changing and responsive but was also itself structured to be a self-critical process on the architectural language in its complex relation to the urban scenario past and present.

### ***L’architecture assassinée*: research as figure**

Aldo Rossi’s watercolour *L’architecture assassinée* (1974)<sup>xxii</sup> dedicated to Manfredo Tafuri is emblematic of the relationship between the two. A response that expresses in figures the reaction of ‘architectural practice’ to the crisis of architecture, its languages and its engagement with the social and the political that Tafuri had denounced in *Architecture and Utopia* (1973), Rossi’s image shows his own architectures of pure geometric solids, urban typologies and personal memories broken into pieces, fractured and collapsed. The breakings that Rossi represents are in fact at the core of the relationship between Tafuri’s ‘historical project’ and Rossi’s critical ‘architectural practice’. Breakings are what both produce, in the language of architecture and in the methods of history, in

order to produce and communicate – differently – a grounded criticism of architecture from within the project (Rossi) and in history (Tafuri). The breakings that Rossi draws are also a symptomatic representation of a shift in Rossi's own work towards the abstraction (from the reality of the city), the analogical (of a city reduced to figure) and the formal (of a self-referential and obsessive personal language). They also mark the breaking that such shift produces in Tafuri's relationship to and critique of Rossi's research.

In order to understand a few aspects of the complexity and of the dynamic evolution of the conflicting relationship between Tafuri and Rossi, which is inhabited by clear contraposition as well as by unresolved ambiguity, it is useful to read Rossi's work through two different texts by Tafuri that, published nearly twenty years apart from each other, well summarize and clarify Tafuri's position on Rossi's 'architectural practice.'<sup>xxiii</sup>

In *Teorie e storia dell'architettura* (1968) Tafuri considers Rossi's 'silent architectural objects' as the effective evidence of the merging of architectural criticism with the criticism of the city. For Tafuri the combination of the two results from 'the wish to adhere with enthusiasm to the multiple pressures of urban reality and, at the same time, to introduce in it *architectural events* and fragments which might force the entire meaning of that reality.'<sup>xxiv</sup> The project of architecture and its experimentation are not limited to questioning and recomposing the language of the architectural object, whether this is derived from the language of a rationalist modernism, or from a typological history of architecture, or from personal memories experiences and suggestion, or all of which are combined in the case of Rossi. The project enacted by Rossi's '*architectural events* and fragments' is in fact urban. Partial and fragmented, Rossi's projects renounce the control of the urban plan; locally inserted in the city, they perform a critical architectural act that goes beyond the city, offering in fact a critique of criticism through a drawn and built architecture. Tafuri reads Rossi's (and Samona's) projects in the city as a form of architectural criticism, that is, criticism performed in and by architecture.<sup>xxv</sup> This is not a project of history, and it is from this operation that Tafuri wants to establish a clear distance. But while the criticism of the 'critics' can only be dismissed, Tafuri remains interested in the alter-ego incarnated by Rossi, that constructs a critical project in architecture initially similar (as long as it lasts), in a way, to Tafuri's critical project in history: fragmented and partial, its work operates rigorously on its own language, suggesting a method at large for the development of a language to address the past of the discipline but also the present of the city (and the past in it). These are the aspects of Rossi's work that interest Tafuri: Rossi's project goes well beyond its suggestive images and evocative memories, offering a critical architectural tool that is always productive of as well as subject to instability. The collapses portrayed in *L'architecture assassinée* then are not caused by Tafuri's attacks on Rossi, but are in fact already genetically imprinted in Rossi's architecture, designed to operate like a surgical instrument on a city that it does not control. It is this critical (and self-critical) element of Rossi's project that Tafuri respects from the distance of history. Not only critical of its own language and critically acting on the city, this architecture is also critical of criticism. '[A]rchitectural criticism – writes Tafuri - puts in crisis the critics of architecture. On the contrary, since the traditional task of criticism is already realised within the architectural structures, one could say that an independently critical architecture has the objective of destroying any critical intervention from outside.'<sup>xxvi</sup>

### ***L'architettura della città: research as architectural text***

Tafuri describes Aldo Rossi's studies on the city - mainly *The Architecture of the City* (1966) but also the series of essays produced before and around it during Rossi's academic career<sup>xxvii</sup> - as a form of 'operative criticism' that is typological and urban. 'Criticism' because it carries out its research from the vast mass of existing material [...] [and] because of its historicistic character. 'Typological' because it insists on formally invariant phenomena: here the meaning of the term 'typology' changes radically, because it has to be redefined each time according to the concrete problems facing it.'<sup>xxviii</sup> Yet the interest of Tafuri lies mainly in the fact that, architectural and

operative, this '[t]ypological criticism is an essentially urban criticism'[159] that addresses the city and makes contemporary planning choices, 'even if only on the level of the structure of the image.' [158] This form of criticism of the urban system 'takes reality as its starting point and models on it a reading immediately translated into systems that [modify] its single components, or, in extreme cases, its fundamental laws.' [159] The typological studies of which Rossi's are one example act through 'a temporary suspension of judgement as regards the city in its global character, in favour of concentrating the analysis on limited sectors-environments, that are seen, however, as among the most vital aspects of urban structure.' [159] For Tafuri the important feature of this criticism is its unsettling work on the established city. Starting from the real city and sampling it, this approach produces formal experimentations that 'as critical analyses [...] upset, examine, reassemble in new forms, the structural elements that the contemporary city tends to see as immutable and undisputable values.' [159] What is essential is that '[i]n this type of experience, historical analysis, critical examination, critical function of the image and demonstrative value of planning, are all indissolubly connected.' [160] For Tafuri here resides the critical strength of Rossi's research: because beyond its isolated formal exercises, and beyond the manipulation of elements abstracted from the city real remembered or imagined, it offers a form of criticism to the dimension of planning. Manipulating, breaking, endlessly experimenting, Rossi's work questions the pre-formative dimension of planning, refuses the 'a priori existence of well-defined form' and is thus ultimately able to 'deny the necessity of a precise configuration for structures.'<sup>xxxix</sup>

Rossi's projects and writings are not history. They are, at most, a form of 'operative criticism', and it is their critical dimension that interests Tafuri. Produced in architecture and through its forms, Rossi's project (his 'architectural practice') is able to approach history not as a static given past but as a inheritance to be challenged questioned and redefined. For Tafuri, what imports of Rossi's work is the attention that he pays to the transformations of the physical and anthropo-geographical environments and the attempt to understand 'the meanings underlying the transformations' [173] through 'the partial questions asked by architecture of architecture.' [160]

### **Analogy: figures without research**

Later works by Aldo Rossi seem to lose the critical energy of his early typological and urban investigations, retracting into a personal sphere of speculation where forms are iterated in a sort of private mantra of memory oblivious of any relation with the real city. The plate *The Analogical City* (1976)<sup>xxx</sup> and the proposal for the *Roma Interrotta* workshop (1978)<sup>xxxi</sup> are examples of such involution in Rossi's work. The city here is reduced to a figure loaded with architectural evocations and personal memories, but removed from the real city, its physical structure, its society and its planning. These projects for the city remain repetitions of known forms and architectural references, the aggregation of which does not raise interrogatives on the making of the urban space, and even less on the meanings of such making. It seems obvious then that Tafuri should be strongly critical of Rossi's later work where the image and its combinatory proliferations are only figures of a subjective 'poetics' divested of the analytical and critical attention to the real city that Tafuri had identified in Rossi's early research. Recurring to Carl Jung definition of 'analogical' thought as 'archaic, unexpressed, and practically inexpressible in words',<sup>xxxii</sup> Rossi's work retracts in an aphasic project that invests the image with analogical meaning, presenting this move as a step forward in an interrogation 'by architecture of architecture'<sup>xxxiii</sup> capable of reaching where the words of 'logical' discourse can not reach.

Here we do not examine Tafuri's reaction to Rossi's painted or collaged analogical architecture<sup>xxxiv</sup> but conclude by showing how Tafuri's examination of Rossi's built projects of the same years recognizes in them the same fading of criticality in relation to the architectural discipline and to the planning of the city.

*Storia dell'architettura italiana 1944-1985* (1986)<sup>xxxv</sup> gives Tafuri the occasion to reconsider Rossi's research in retrospective, nearly twenty years after the theoretical and methodological

framework that he had identified in *Theories and History of Architecture* (1968) and more than ten years after the architectural ‘collapse’ depicted in Rossi’s *L’architecture assassinée* (1974). In this book Tafuri reads the Gallarate housing complex planned by Carlo Aymonino (1967-70, built 1970-73) as an implementation of the strategy of the formation of the city ‘by finite parts’.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Part of the complex and a response to Aymonino’s building (a ‘monument to noise’ of ‘stacked words’ and ‘polivalent images’ [152]), Aldo Rossi’s block acts as ‘hieratic and sustained’ silent witness of Aymonino theatrical mise en scène. For Tafuri this building, like other of Rossi’s works from the same years, shows that by now his research ‘resists any compromise with reality, because the return to the ‘ancient house of language’ is possible only through an affirmation of aloof indifference.’ [166]

For Tafuri, Rossi’s early ‘architectural practice’, both in his projects and in his writings, had been a search for those primary forms ‘that are exiled from the urban space, but intend to speak of their exile, to propose a theory of the city as locus of collective memory.’ [167-168] This search for form and research through form is what Tafuri had clearly identified as a critical work internal to architecture. In this sense the estrangement, the silence, the abstraction, the suspension of life in Rossi’s early projects can be read as a stubborn construction by architecture of an enforced distance that is necessary for the project to perform its critical act. The congested amassing of forms in Rossi’s drawings and paintings and the distillation of silent forms in his early built projects produce the same critical distance that Tafuri constructs in his ‘historical project’. Even the demolition of forms and of their relations that is performed in *L’architecture assassinée* echoes the active, critical and distance producing destruction that Tafuri employs in his project of history (deriving it from Walter Benjamin’s definition of the role of destruction in his philosophy of history).<sup>xxxvii</sup> Destruction, criticality and distance characterize up to this point (the mid-1970s) in different ways the project of Tafuri in history (‘historical project’) and of Rossi in architecture (‘architectural practice’ as we have defined it here). Then after, the ‘assassination’, what dies is not the critical history of Tafuri, nor the architecture of Aldo Rossi, but that critical research into its meanings that had made of it a form of criticism. After the ‘assassination’ Tafuri provisionally concludes, in apparent contradiction with his own words in *Theories and Histories*: ‘The representation is all: it is pointless to strive to find in it hidden meanings in regions that it can not access. The city proves to be [...] a simple pretext.’<sup>xxxviii</sup> In Rossi’s projects of the 1980s Tafuri finds ‘finally exhausted’ the tradition of the critically operative urban studies that had been introduced in the late 1960s by Aldo Rossi and Carlo Aymonino.’ But he had seen it coming: for him the static destruction of *L’architecture assassinée* was in fact ‘a frozen ruination: the fragments hanging or thrown into the void, remain still. This loss is not painful: the wayfarer was prepared for this.’<sup>xxxix</sup>

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- <sup>i</sup> ‘Il progetto storico di Manfredo Tafuri’/‘The Historical Project of Manfredo Tafuri’, Vittorio Gregotti (ed.), special issue of *Casabella*, no.619-20 (1995).
- <sup>ii</sup> ‘Being Manfredo Tafuri’, Ignasi De Solà-Morales (ed.), special issue of *ANY (Architecture New York)*, no.25-26 (2000).
- <sup>iii</sup> Manfredo Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance. Princes, Cities, Architects*, trans. By Daniel Sherer (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). Originally published in Italian as *Ricerca del Rinascimento. Principi, città, architetti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1992).
- <sup>iv</sup> Marco Biraghi, *Progetto di crisi. Manfredo Tafuri e l’architettura contemporanea* (Milan: Christian Marinotti Edizioni, 2005). Andrew Leach, *Choosing History* (Ghent: A&S/books, 2007).
- <sup>v</sup> See Paolo Morachiello, ‘The Department of Architectural History, “A Detailed Description”’, in *The School of Venice*, Luciano Semerani (ed.), special issue of *AD Profile* (1985).
- <sup>vi</sup> I discuss this in Teresa Stoppani, ‘Unfinished Business. The Historical Project after Manfredo Tafuri’, in Jane Rendell, Jonathan Hill, Mark Dorrian, Murray Fraser (eds.), *Critical Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp.22-30.
- <sup>vii</sup> Manfredo Tafuri, *Teorie e storia dell’architettura* (Bari: Laterza, 1968); English translation, *Theories and History of Architecture* (London: Granada, 1980). Manfredo Tafuri, *Progetto e utopia. Architettura e sviluppo capitalistico* (Bari: Laterza, 1973); English translation, *Architecture and Utopia. Design and capitalist Development* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1976). Manfredo Tafuri, *La sfera e il labirinto. Avanguardie e architettura da Piranesi agli anni ’70* (Turin: Einaudi, 1980); English translation, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1987).
- <sup>viii</sup> The ‘historical project’ was originally presented in Manfredo Tafuri ‘Il ‘progetto’ storico’, in *Casabella*, no.429 (1977), pp.11-18. Published in English as ‘The Historical ‘Project’’, in *Oppositions*, no.17 (1979), pp.54-75. Reworked as ‘Introduction: The Historical ‘Project’’, in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, pp.1-21.
- <sup>ix</sup> ‘There is no such thing as criticism, there is only history.’ Manfredo Tafuri interviewed by Richard Ingersoll, ‘There is no criticism, only history’, in *Casabella*, no.619-620 (1995) p. 97.
- <sup>x</sup> Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>xi</sup> I contribute to this discussion with Teresa Stoppani, ‘The Building of Tension. Manfredo Tafuri’s history between operative criticism and historical project, between critical practices and material practices in architecture’, in Lorens Holms, Hamid van Koten (eds.), *Reflections on Creativity: exploring the role of theory in creative practices*, Dundee: Duncan of Jordanstone College 2007.
- <sup>xii</sup> See note 3.
- <sup>xiii</sup> ‘Passato irrisolto, inquieto presente’ is the title with which *Casabella* publishes the Preface of *Ricerca del Rinascimento*, anticipating the publication of the book. ‘Unresolved past’ and ‘unsettled present’ are also Tafuri’s closing words: ‘Il “debole potere” dell’analisi, in altre parole, viene proposto come momento di un processo che lasci vivere i problemi irrisolti nel passato, inquietando il nostro presente.’ Manfredo Tafuri, ‘Passato irrisolto, inquieto presente’, in *Casabella*, no.585 (1991), p.40. (‘The “weak power” of the analysis, in other words, is proposed as a moment in a process that keeps alive the unresolved problems in the past, thus unsettling our present.’ My translation).
- <sup>xiv</sup> ‘Contemporary’ is a term Tafuri would most likely refuse, as for him the ‘contemporary’ is still part of a long and far from resolved modernity. Tafuri would rather speak of the ‘present’. Quite significantly then, Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co’s *Architettura contemporanea* (Milan: Electa, 1976) is published in English as *Modern Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979).
- <sup>xv</sup> Marco Biraghi, *Progetto di crisi*. See note 4.

<sup>xvi</sup> Diane Y. Ghirardo, 'Manfredo Tafuri and Architecture Theory in the U.S., 1970-2000', in 'Mining Autonomy', *Perspecta. The Yale Architectural Journal*, no.33 (2002), pp.38-47.

<sup>xvii</sup> Ghirardo, *Perspecta* 33, p.45.

<sup>xviii</sup> See Manfredo Tafuri, 'Introduction: The Historical 'Project'', in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, pp.1-21. See also Marco Biraghi, 'Introduzione. Progetto di crisi', in *Progetto di crisi*, pp.9-53.

<sup>xix</sup> In *Theories and History of Architecture* Tafuri had produced an analysis of the established methodologies of the history of architecture and a critique of what he defined 'operative criticism', a form of manipulated and intentionally biased history constructed by critics who were also active in architectural practice, or actively engaged in support of specific trends in design – an instrumental history. For Tafuri 'operative criticism is an analysis of architecture (or of the arts in general) that, instead of an abstract survey, has as its objective the planning of a precise poetical tendency, anticipated in its structures and derived from historical analyses programmatically distorted and finalised.' (Tafuri, 'Operative Criticism', in *Theories and History of Architecture*, p.141). Tafuri traces the beginning of operative criticism in Giovanni Pietro Bellori's *Vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti moderni* (1672) and then identifies it – among others - in Sigfried Giedion (*Space, Time and Architecture*, 1940) and in his Italian contemporaries Bruno Zevi (*Storia dell'architettura moderna*, 1950) and Leonardo Benevolo (*Storia dell'architettura moderna*, 1960).

<sup>xx</sup> See note 8.

<sup>xxi</sup> See *The School of Venice*, Luciano Semerani (ed.), special issue of *AD Profile* (1985).

<sup>xxii</sup> The time lag and the space between languages occupied by the translation allows Rossi's reaction to Tafuri's text to inhabit the text itself: Aldo Rossi's *L'architecture assassinée*, a rebuke in drawing to some of Tafuri's remarks in *Progetto e Utopia* (1973) that seemed to suggest the 'death' of architecture as a project, becomes the cover image of the book's English translation *Architecture and Utopia* (1976).

<sup>xxiii</sup> Here I am 'bypassing' Tafuri's analysis of Rossi's work in 'L'architecture dans le boudoir', in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, pp. 267-290; originally published in *Oppositions*, no.3 (1974). On this see Marco Biraghi, 'Il frammento e il silenzio', in *Progetto di crisi*, pp.171-204.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Tafuri, *Theories and Histories of Architecture*, p.130.

<sup>xxv</sup> *Ibidem*, p.130.

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Ibidem*, p.130.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Aldo Rossi, *L'architettura della città* (Padua:Marsilio, 1966); English translation, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1982). Aldo Rossi, *Scritti scelti sull'architettura e la città. 1956-1972* (Milan: CittàStudi 1975); partial English translation in *Selected writings and projects* (London and Dublin: Gandon Editions, 1983).

<sup>xxviii</sup> Tafuri, *Theories and Histories of Architecture*, p.158.

<sup>xxix</sup> *Ibidem*, p.160. Tafuri here continues: 'These studies are compelled to continuously redefine architecture and then, each successive time, to reject it, to salvage it, to upset its meaning: not on the bases of abstract generalisations, but by founding the research for a new quality on the solid ground of the partial questions asked by architecture of architecture. [...] not taking for granted even the physicality of the organisms or the possibility of defining some functions [...], typological criticism puts again in question all the problems that functionalist literature had taken as already solved. Form becomes, now, an object of study as a typological theme in itself.'

<sup>xxx</sup> Aldo Rossi, 'La Città Analoga: Tavola / The analogical city: Plate', in *Lotus*, no.13 (1976), pp. 5-8. Tafuri comments on this in Manfredo Tafuri, 'Ceci n'est pas une ville', *Lotus*, no.13 (1976), pp. 10-13. The relationship between the two is analyzed in Pierluigi Nicolini, 'Tafuri and the Analogous City', in *ANY*, no.25-26 (2000), pp.16-20.

<sup>xxxi</sup> See *Roma Interrotta*, Michael Graves (ed.), *AD Profiles*, no.20 (1979). In particular, 'Nolli: Sector XI. Aldo Rossi', pp.88-90.

<sup>xxxii</sup> [...] ‘logical’ thought is what is expressed in words directed to the outside world in the form of discourse. ‘Analogical’ thought is sensed yet unreal, imagined yet silent; it is not a discourse but rather a meditation on themes of the past, an interior monologue. Logical thought is ‘thinking in words’. Analogical thought is archaic, unexpressed, and practically inexpressible in words’. Carl G. Jung, in *The Freud/Jung Letters: the Correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung* (March 02, 1910), William McGuire (ed.), translated from the German by Ralph Manheim and R. F. C. Hull; abridged by Alan McGlashan, Abridged edition (London: Penguin Twentieth Century Classics, 1991), p.160. Cited in Aldo Rossi, ‘An Analogical Architecture’, in *Architecture and Urbanism*, May 1976, pp.74-76, p.74. Cited also in Vittorio Savi, *L Architettura di Aldo Rossi* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1976), pp.112-113.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Tafuri, *Theories and Histories of Architecture*, p.160.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> See Pierluigi Nicolini, ‘Tafuri and the Analogous City’, in *ANY*, no.25-26 (2000), pp.16-20.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Manfredo Tafuri, *Storia dell’architettura italiana 1944-1985* (Turin: Einaudi, 1986); English translation, *A History of Italian Architecture, 1944-1985* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1990). The quotes that follow are my translations of the Italian edition.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> For Tafuri Aymonino’s complex is ‘too open to the surroundings [...] to be a really self-sufficient sector; too ‘designed’, to assume a methodological value: the complex seems to painfully express its condition of infinitesimal shred, helplessly incapable of ‘putting order’ in the ocean-like periphery of the metropolis’ [...] the intense life here announced is in fact lived mainly by the [architectural] forms.’ Tafuri, *Storia dell’architettura italiana 1944-1985*, p.152. My translation.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘The Destructive Character’ (1931), in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, Peter Demetz (ed.) (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 302-03.

Walter Benjamin, ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’ (1940), in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, Hannah Arendt (ed.) (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), p.253-264.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Tafuri, *Storia dell’architettura italiana 1944-1985*, p.170. My translation.

<sup>xxxix</sup> *Ibidem*, p.171. My translation.