

Aldo Rossi, architect, scientist—a storm of silence ... an architecture of alienation

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"In their existing organization, monopolizing science and remaining thus outside social life, the savants form a separate caste, in many respects analogous to the priesthood. Scientific abstraction is their God, living and real individuals their victims, and they are the consecrated and licensed sacrificers."

Michael Bakunin¹

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How is one to acknowledge, to come to terms with, to understand the work of Aldo Rossi, apostle of history, canonist of *Tendenza*, witness to futures. For us, his writings are inhospitable, his reasoning enigmatic—the word is cryptic, contradictory. His theorising lacks cogency; little is explained, whole theses are founded on unargued, *ex-cathedra* claims. His pronouncements are doctrinal, magisterial, mandarin-like; alienating ... seemingly alienated. For us, his architecture too is enigmatic. The pristine buildings appear impassive, unyielding, forbidding; the spaces *de Chirico*-like in their aloofness, in their silent suppressions. An alienating, seemingly alienated architecture. And his drawings, his sketches? For us, they also are enigmatic; meticulous, they too are desolate, depopulated, harsh.

Why bother, why attempt to penetrate these enigmas? Why seek to bridge the distances of alienation; why strain to reach for the meanings, the intentions; to reach across the writings, the buildings, the drawings?

Above all, because something beckons; because our own alienations echo insistently among the silences and disjunctions. Like Rossi, we recoil from the architecture of consumer capitalism; from the daily subordinations to

commercial ends of building, of architecture, of "the City"; from the deprivations of artificially produced land values, housing shortages and 'redundancy' among construction workers. We too shrink from the inflated opulence of newly developed city centres; from the disdain of an aesthetic of dominance—the relentlessly repetitive facades, the unrelieved uniformity of office blocks, of schools, of hospitals, of town halls, of factories ... Like Rossi, we too live in the wake of the 'new', the late twentieth century architecture. We live in a storm of silence: we live with architectural practices that have been cleansed of social intent, freed of communal responsibilities, purged of emancipatory ideals. These, for us, are neutered, mutilated practices—an architecture torn from the social commitments of the early Modern Movement. Unlike Rossi, we affirm such commitment.

Architecture, for Rossi, is autonomous, self-determining, independent—for him this is central, "a fundamental given". Human agency is structured, ordained, pre-destined—formed by History as Fate. 'Subjects' are severed from 'objects'—human subjects are split, separated, detached from the objects of their actions and thoughts. Action is governed by "the

collective memory", consciousness is regulated by an immanent "unconscious": in architecture, meaning is dislocated from human interpretation—it inheres, apparently, in "typology". In what follows, we examine this set of assertions, these core assumptions in Rossi's work. First, we consider *The Architecture of the City*¹ a thesis that has influenced and shaped contemporary architectural theory, practice and criticism². Against this background, we turn to the apparent bombshell, the detonation of *A Scientific Autobiography*³ where his seemingly sensitive, compassionate and humane tone stands in contrast to the hard, the unhesitating "science" of the former book.

"AUTONOMOUS ARCHITECTURE"—A WAY OF SEEING?

Rossi's views of reality are, of course, embedded in the arguments he presents; arguments which, characteristically, take the form of constructed dichotomies, of polarised dualisms:

The contrast between particular and universal, between individual and collective, emerges from the city and from its construction, its architecture. This contrast is one of the principal viewpoints from which the city will be studied in this book. It manifests itself in different ways: in the relationship between public and private buildings, between the rational design of urban architecture and the values of *locus* or place (Ref 2, p 21).

Here, in the introduction to *The Architecture of the City*, he signals the substance and the prevailing mode of argument.

We learn that ideas, concepts, "emerge" from objects; that they issue from artefacts, from inanimate 'things'. More, we are told that abstractions—"the city" and "its architecture"—give rise to, they define and differentiate between such mental constructs as particular and universal, individual and collective. We are informed that, far from being designations made by human beings, notions of public and private, of rationality and value also emanate from objects—they too are manifested by "the contrast". Architecture, the city are, apparently, primary: buildings act, people merely react; cities are animate, productive, citizens merely respond. Elsewhere we encounter more of these inversions, more anthropomorphic imagery—much more. We find, for instance, that "architecture gives concrete form to society . . . the city grows upon itself; it acquires a consciousness and memory" (p 21); that cities develop innately, "How does the city grow? The original nucleus, enclosed within the walls, extends itself according to its own specific nature . . ." (p 88). Human settlements, we learn, have unique egos and ambitions, "Certainly there are cities that realise their own inclinations and others that do not . . . the city has primarily itself as an end . . ." (p 130 and 131), ". . . every city possesses a personal soul formed of old traditions and living feelings as well as unresolved aspirations" (p 162). And so on, and on, and on.

Such phraseology is more than a way of writing, it betrays a way of seeing. It conveys a conception of everyday, social life in which women and men are stripped of ideas and ideals, of their capacities to act, to struggle, to resist—to effect change. They are seen as actors for whom scripts are already written.

This is Rossi's urban, his social dialectic; a fixed, a decidedly structured dialectic—the stable relationships of pairs of purportedly enduring, "timeless", opposites. And this is the viewpoint which sustains and is sustained by his central claim, that architecture is autonomous,

. . . to consider the city as architecture means to recognise the importance of architecture as a discipline that has a self-determined autonomy (and thus is not autonomous in an abstract sense) . . . (p 165).

Architecture, that is to say, is literally—quite literally—autonomous (see Note 1); a depiction that occurs and recurs in each of the four chapters of the book: in the arguments made for architectural "typology", for the elemental structure of cities, for *locus* and urban history and, last, for urban dynamics and "politics as choice".

Consider, first, Rossi's use of the notion of typology, the stress which he places on the concept of architectural type. This key facet of what he views as scientific theory is the antithesis of "naive functionalism"; it constitutes a major departure from the functionalist theories of the Modern Movement. These, he argues, are defunct, sterile—they cannot account for change (see, for example, p 46, 55 and 56). So, commenting on the Palazzo della Ragione at Padua, he is

. . . struck by the multiplicity of functions that a building of this type can contain over time and how these functions are entirely independent of the form . . . it is precisely the form that impresses us; we live it and experience it, and in turn it structures the city (p 29).

Thus, rather than classify buildings and other urban artefacts by the uses to which they might be put, he categorises by type, by formal characteristics. For him, categories of this order (for example, basilica, rotunda, forum, amphitheatre) draw on so-called origins; they tap primary causes, permanences.

Derived from "logical principles", he contends that such typologies are universal, they transcend particular built forms. Indeed, they are "prior to and constitute" form; in architecture, "there is an element that plays its own role". In his usage, a type depicts more than the shared attributes of objects, of actions or of events; architectural typologies—studies of type—reveal the very structuring principles of architecture. Types, he states, are constant, they are to be found in all architectural artefacts, they are "the very idea of architecture, that which is closest to its essence". Accordingly, they manifest themselves with the character of necessity, they are elements that cannot be further reduced (p 40 and 41).

Whatever their limitations, and they are many, functionalist theories—naive or otherwise—are predicated on

the human, the active use of buildings, of cities. Rossi's irreducible, his transcendent, his universal types are not; they 'play their own role'. From him, we learn that typologies of form are independent of active human intent, of human agency; they are the self-determined material of an autonomous discipline, architecture.

The idea of architectural autonomy rests on the assertion that the principles of the discipline are "unique and immutable" (p 116). That is to say, the practice, the process of architecture is held to be independent of other disciplines; it has its own norms, rules, laws. And the materials, the concrete forms on which architects work, are taken to be similarly autonomous, immutable; as objects they are in themselves predetermined. In short, architectural type is prior, "In spite of changes, it has always imposed itself on the 'feelings and reason' as the principle of architecture and of the city" (p 41).

This evocation of *a priori* conditions also underpins the concepts introduced in the second and third chapters of *The Architecture of the City* – "primary elements" and "*locus*".

Rossi's conception of the primary elements of cities stands in contrast to functionalist theories of urban process. The notion is, he concedes, elusive (p 86 and 99). Insofar as we find his explanations intelligible, the concept appears to refer, chiefly, to the presence and location of "monuments"—components of cities that he considers formative, permanent. He argues that such "public" buildings (and other urban artefacts) give distinctive character, quality, to cities and/or to particular urban areas. These "nuclei of aggregation" generate urban form, they instigate urban development—"they participate in the evolution of the city over time in a permanent way" (pp 86–87). Monuments (for instance, the theatre and amphitheatre at Arles; the Pantheon in Rome; Trafalgar Square, London) "are always primary elements"; they always exert power, the "power to retard or accelerate the urban process" (p 63).

The central theme of the third chapter, *locus*, is treated in a like manner. Here too attention is directed to predetermined, to prior conditions; to, that is, effects external to active social agency. Here Rossi extends his critique of modernist city planning (for him, an eclipse of history) to include a rejection of current preoccupations with context, with the emphasis on facade matching of 'contextual' urban design (for him, a mere elaboration of functionalism). In his view, the notion of context lacks "scientific" potential; he associates it with scene setting on an urban scale—"illusionism . . . the making of a scene . . .". In contrast, the concept *locus* offers scientific promise, "the present analysis approaches the problem of the *locus* by attempting to set out an extremely rational definition of an artifact" (p 123). Further, it offers historical understanding: *locus*—place—is, in his conception, the quintessence of urban history. It has its origins in the mythic, the mystical concept *genius loci*; the spirits, the gods that govern particular sites and preside over all that occurs on them (p 103).

The notion is, we are told, "rather opaque", it is "delicate"—it embodies values as well as relationships.

The former, we learn, "embrace a series of values that are outside and beyond what we [humans] experience"; the latter are the unique, the singular relationships between specific, physical locations (sites) and the buildings on them (for instance, Trajan's Forum in Rome, the Sacro Monte at Orta). This singularity implies, Rossi notes, "memory", an abstract quality that, seemingly, inheres in architectural place,

. . . the relation of architecture to its location . . . the precise articulation of, the *locus* itself as a singular artifact determined by its space and time, by its topographical dimensions and its form, by its being the seat of a succession of ancient and recent events, by its memory (p 107).

This is the binding constituent of urban history—of, indeed, collective life,

. . . the city itself is the collective memory of its people . . . the city is the *locus* of the collective memory. This relationship between the *locus* and the citizenry then becomes the city's predominant image, both of architecture and of landscape . . . memory becomes the guiding thread of the entire complex urban structure . . . (p 130).

As Rossi suggests, his argument is abstruse, opaque. We nonetheless find two consistent themes. First, whereas the memory which he ascribes to architectural place is treated as active, as assertive, the memories of living and real human beings—the recollections of lived experience—are treated as passive, as receptive. Second, he calls repeatedly on the notion of collective memory. This, in his usage, is an undifferentiated, a disembodied, a transcendent group recollection; one that is unaffected by the differing, the often antagonistic, the frequently contested social interests of past and present.

This set of abstractions—typology, primary elements, *locus*—is, one might imagine, intruded upon in the final chapter of the book. Here Rossi turns to "urban dynamics"; principally to economic activities (to expropriations of land—property), to issues of urban scale (to the growth and concentration of urban, metropolitan, populations) and to housing, "the housing problem" (pp 139–161). Here, however, we encounter yet more abstraction, further disembodied 'forces'—the "universal and permanent . . . forces of the urban dynamic" (p 27). And here, in his final paragraphs, he arrives at "that which constitutes the first fact of the polis, *politics*" (p 161), his concluding abstraction.

Political action, we are informed, is a matter of choice:

Politics constitutes the problem of choices. Who ultimately chooses the image of a city if not the city itself—and always and only through its political institutions. . . . Athens, Rome, and Paris are the form of their politics, the signs of their collective will (p 162—emphasis in original).

Political intentions, political activities are viewed as issues of selection, as 'wills' that opt 'collectively' for one or another given course of action. Such choices occur at,

. . . moment[s] of decisive historical and political import-

ance . . . [when] it is . . . possible for the community to resolve its problems of choice, to desire collectively one kind of city and to reject another (p 116).

Thus, political choice is removed from the continuities of everyday experience to be situated at high, at significant, at important 'moments'. Decisive political action is distanced from the daily struggles of social life. Seemingly, for Rossi, histories are not accounts of conflicting, of continuously conflicting social interests. They do not chronicle constant clashes of experience, of ideas and sentiments among and between social groupings; they are not reconstructions of oppositions—now hidden, now open—between, say, patricians and plebians, between nobles and serfs . . . Politics as choice, politics as selection: not as people's day-to-day efforts, their continuing struggles to determine and formulate, to challenge and reformulate the choices available to them.

These are some of the themes which we have drawn from *The Architecture of the City*; themes that, since 1966 (when the book was first published), the author has endorsed in Introductions to a second Italian edition (1969), to editions in Portuguese (1971), in German (1973), and in an American edition (1978). Their elaboration in successive chapters represents, we are assured, a scientific enterprise; one that deals "rationally" with the purportedly fixed nature, the unchanging "essence" of architecture. Accordingly, the argument runs, the act of architecture—the making of cities—calls on immutable principles; on the autonomous axioms of typology, of primary elements, of *locus*, of urban dynamics. Such acts issue from those unique beings, "artists". They spring from privileged individuals with, apparently, distinctive powers of insight, of effort, of response: "men of art and culture" who, unlike the unseeing mass of women and men, possess,

. . . a vision of architecture based on the real, a totalistic vision of which perhaps only artists are capable (p 111).

THE ABSENT SUBJECT—SILENCES OF AUTONOMY

What strikes us about *The Architecture of the City* is its silences. What we find particularly evident in Rossi's text is the marginality to his arguments of living people, of human endeavour, of *praxis*—people's active, their conscious transformations of their worlds and of themselves. Where, on occasion, he does refer to human agency, it is to neutralise, to cleanse such agency of its transformational character: in his presentation 'architecture', 'the city' makes itself—people are bystanders, the observers of transcendent historical events (see Note 2). Throughout the book, 'history' is depicted as fate:

Perhaps the laws of the city are exactly like those that regulate the life and destiny of individual men. Every biography has its own interest, even though it is circumscribed by birth and death. Certainly the architecture of the

city, the human thing par excellence, is the physical sign of this biography, beyond the meanings and the feelings with which we recognize it (p 163).

In Rossi's account, conscious agency has been submerged in destiny, in the laws of the city: *praxis* has been overwhelmed by the metaphysical, by what lies beyond meanings and feelings. That, individually and jointly, men and women make their own histories; that, though not in circumstances of their choosing, they transform their given, their directly encountered worlds; that, in so doing, they change the "human thing par excellence . . . the architecture of the city"—all this appears to have been lost to Rossi's history.

In the second book, *A Scientific Autobiography* (1981), this view of a prefigured, of a fixed history reaches fruition. Here we find an intense, a poetic melancholy; an explicit, a lyrically expressed alienation. Here the promise of Architecture as Science, as an autonomous discipline, is realised: the impetus of typology, of elemental structure, of urban history continues, it presses. Here optimism of will has been overrun by a pessimism of intellect—action, purposeful intervention and hope lie elsewhere:

It is no longer possible to do anything about it: to modify the misery of modern culture, a great popular movement is necessary, and the misery of architecture is the expression of this knowledge (Ref 3, p 23).

Here again, we find a paralysis of architecture—an expulsion of social content, a reduction to typological form. We find impatience with the idea of an architecture of social change, refusal of Modern Movement "utopianism": we find a quietism, a resigned, world-weary assent to ineffectiveness:

To what, then, could I have aspired in my craft? Certainly to small things, having seen that the possibility of great ones was historically precluded (prefatory comment).

Actually, this project ['Villa with Interior'], like these notes, speaks of the dissolution of the discipline . . . I am not sure how real this dissolution is. Perhaps it also is part of my awareness that great things are no longer possible and that the limitations of one's craft are a form of defense (p 51)

In speaking of these objects and projects of mine, I think once again of ending my work as an architect. It is a task that I have always attempted (p 78).

In this mood, Rossi once more takes up the "principal objective" of the study he recorded in his earlier book: to investigate "relations . . . between facts"; to establish,

. . . the relationship between the singularity of form and the multiplicity of functions . . . [that] constitutes the meaning of architecture (Ref 2, p 179).

Meaning in architecture—expressly aesthetic meaning—is portrayed in essentialist terms as "timeless", as "fundamental", as "of absolute purity". Such meaning is offered in terms of the finite, the fixed dualisms of birth and death, of origin and finality, of beginning and end,

... years later I would come to linger over the meaning of the beginning and the end as values independent from the intermediate ... I now believe that the beginning and end of things have been most important for me, and they have acquired much clarity: there is a close relationship between my initial search to reestablish the discipline of architecture and my final result of dissolving or forgetting it" (1981, p 82).

These ultimate states, these absolutes of genesis and dissolution have, we learn, remained with Rossi; they pervade his latter as they did his former thoughts. Throughout, he tells us, he has viewed such meanings as intrinsic to architecture. They are immanent in, they are transmitted by built artefacts. They reside in, they are disseminated by transcendent building types such as courts (for instance, the Lichthof at the University of Zurich) and galleries (for example, the Galleria of Milan); by timeless monuments such as the Alhambra in Granada; by unique *loci*, by singular places such as the Wall Street area of New York:

I have always claimed that places are stronger than people, the fixed scene stronger than the transitory succession of events. This is the theoretical basis not of my architecture, but of architecture itself (p 50).

In this context, we are invited to think of cities as vast theatres, as auditoria in which "people are like actors", as stages on which "when the footlights go up ... everyone acts out his little part". The scripts, though, are already written, they cannot be changed: "in the end, neither the mediocre actor nor the sublime actress is able to alter the course of events" (p 50 and 51). Architectural types, urban monuments and places provide arenas for these performances. They are the sources of the meanings within which (when the footlights go up) people enact their supposedly ritualised lives. They furnish the meanings within which the act, the ceremony of architecture takes place:

Today if I were to talk about architecture, I would say that it is a ritual rather than a creative process ... Rituals give us the comfort of continuity, of repetition, compelling us to an oblique forgetfulness, allowing us to live with every change which, because of its inability to evolve, constitutes a destruction (p 37).

We note a shift of mood, not of substance. For his first book, Rossi claimed to have adopted a scientific stance; in this manner he searched for verities untouched by the 'distortions' of ideology. In this mode, he sought enduring architectural principles in typology, in elemental structure, in *locus*, in urban dynamics. And while, in the later text, he recalls these same preoccupations (see Note 3), here he assumes the conventionally contrasted posture of poetic sensibility; that of cultivated insight, of studied sensitivity, of schooled susceptibility:

We could speak of every project as if it were an unfinished love affair; it is most beautiful before it ends. And for every authentic artist this means the desire to remake, not in order to effect some change (which is the mark of superficial

people) but out of a strange profundity of feeling for things, in order to see what action develops in the same context, or how, conversely, the context makes slight alterations in the action (p 78).

Authentic art (architecture) is, presumably, a distinct, a distinctive category of human experience, of endeavour. And, if Rossi's claims are to be granted, authentic artists, architects, "have access to a privileged way of looking, of observing" (p 61). They exercise this prerogative, this profundity of feeling, this unique sensibility, by mediating the meanings embedded in the "fixed scene of human events"—in architecture, in 'the city'. Their intention, as Rossi insists, is not to effect change; indeed, he is "disgusted by anyone who speaks of art as 'liberation'" (p 38). Their purpose, he explains, is to observe, to watch over the "very destiny of things"; their mission is to tend, to wait on the "singular authority of the built object ... a permanence beyond people" (p 53).

We take this reverence for 'the authority of the built object' to be the central emphasis of the theory of autonomous architecture. We view this devotion to 'a permanence beyond people' as the conceptual underpinning of Tendenza practice (see Note 4). Consider, by way of illustration, the school building (1979–82) that Rossi designed for the town of Broni; in particular, the typological features which he used. These include:

- a hierarchical, bi-axial form of plan (the principal axis connecting two main entrances and the other linking minor access points) and a symmetrical, cloister-like courtyard (Figs. 1 and 2);
- an octagonal, baptistry-like, centrally positioned, school assembly hall (Fig. 3);
- a formal evocation of the Abbé Laugier's 'primitive hut' at the entrance to the courtyard (Fig. 4), and
- a reference to, a 'quotation' from the portico of Villa Forni (Andrea Palladio) at the other major entrance (Fig. 5) (see Note 5).

The meanings which designers might attach to these forms and devices may well be acknowledged by others, especially by fellow devotees—the *cognoscenti*. They too are likely to associate axial planning with long-established pedagogic ideals, with, say, a hierarchic, a 'rational' order; they too may link a quadrangular courtyard with cloistered, monastic contemplation; they too may be aware of the disciplinary connotations of a centralised, panopticon-like space for scholastic assembly; they too may be alive to the edifying significance, at school entrances, of reference to a supposedly archetypal form (the 'primitive hut') and to a precedent from the High Renaissance. Alternatively of course, they may identify other, possibly less prosaic allusions.

Outside of such a cultural enclave however—beyond the elite—meanings of this nature must, presumably, be shared atavistically: as we have learnt, they are elements of an engrained, a universal unconscious—of a collective, an undifferentiated memory. But, as we have also learnt, it is architects who are called on to interpret these

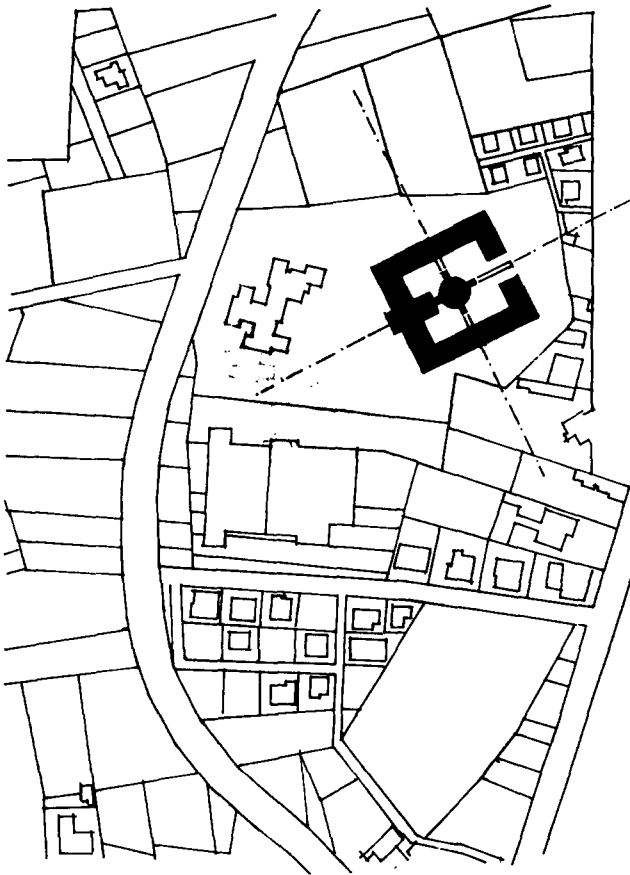


Figure 1.

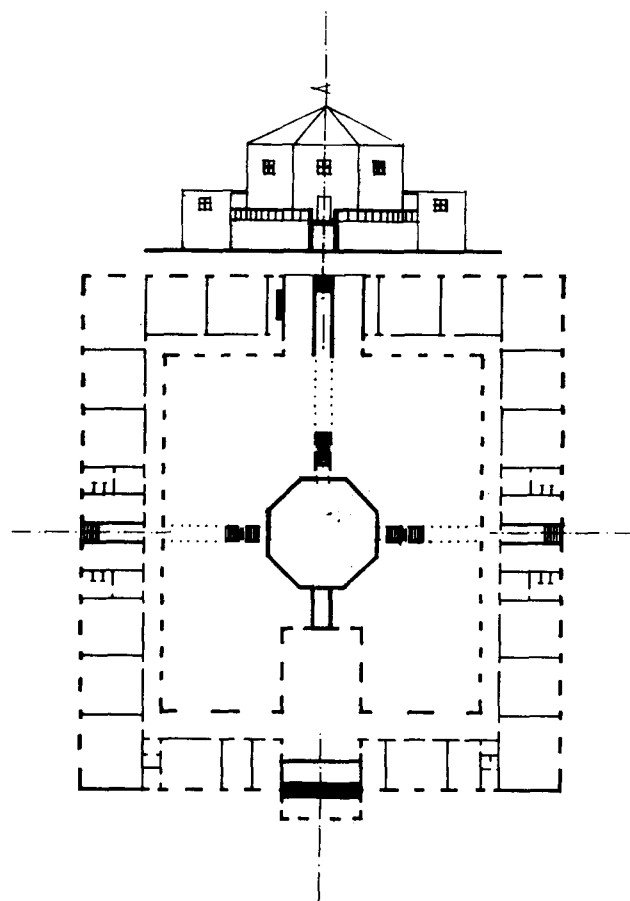


Figure 2.

meanings. As scientists, as artists, they—the elect, the initiated—are credited with being singularly attuned to a generic, a primeval knowledge. So, we are advised, it is they who evoke collective memories, who summon folk sentiment, who orchestrate public imagery. So, describing the “significance . . . as a public building” of his project for a cemetery at Modena (1976 –), Rossi claims to command, via the autonomy of his discipline, common, universal symbols,

... architecture can only use its own given elements, refusing any suggestion not born of its own making; therefore, the references to the cemetery are also found in the architecture of the cemetery, the house, and the city . . . this project for a cemetery complies with the image of cemetery that each one of us possesses⁴.

“... the image of a cemetery that everyone has”⁵: meaning in architecture is, we gather, available—it lies entombed, awaiting release by artists, scientists. It is not, we are invited to conclude, a living issue; one that is produced and reproduced in daily life, one that is socially defined, challenged and redefined—repeatedly, continuously. Quite the contrary. For Rossi, architectural meaning exists, autonomously: effective dissent from predetermined definitions is “historically precluded”; people endure, they submit to architectures of dominance:

In a certain sense, there is no such thing as buildings that are politically ‘opposed’, since the ones that are realized are always those of the dominant class . . . (Ref 2, p 113).

“We seek a people”

... I dream of a work of really great breadth, ranging through the whole region of element, object, meaning and style.

...
We must go on seeking it!
We have found parts, but not the whole!
We still lack the ultimate power, for:
the people are not with us.
But we seek a people.

Paul Klee⁶

We return to the question with which we began our comments on Aldo Rossi’s work: how, we asked, is one to come to terms with, to interpret this work?

Rossi seeks an architecture of transcendence. He searches for a self-referring discipline that is based on the “timeless”, typological constituents of buildings, on the “universal”, morphological elements of cities. As we have argued, his quest and his architecture are removed from human *praxis*; he has distanced them from the transformational capacities which people, the makers of buildings and cities, exercise. This is hardly surprising; he has, he assures us, “always considered change a characteristic of cretins” (Ref 3, p 53). This turning from human agency is decisive. It marks an alienation from the very source from which a transcendent architecture could spring; an architecture that has been freed from the

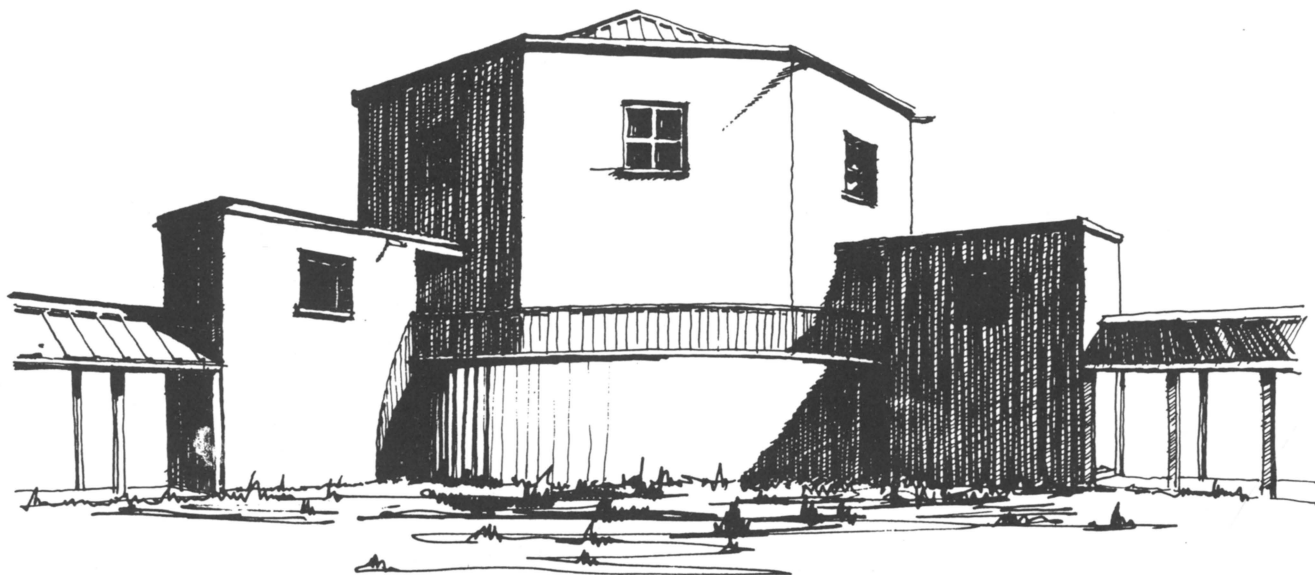


Figure 3.

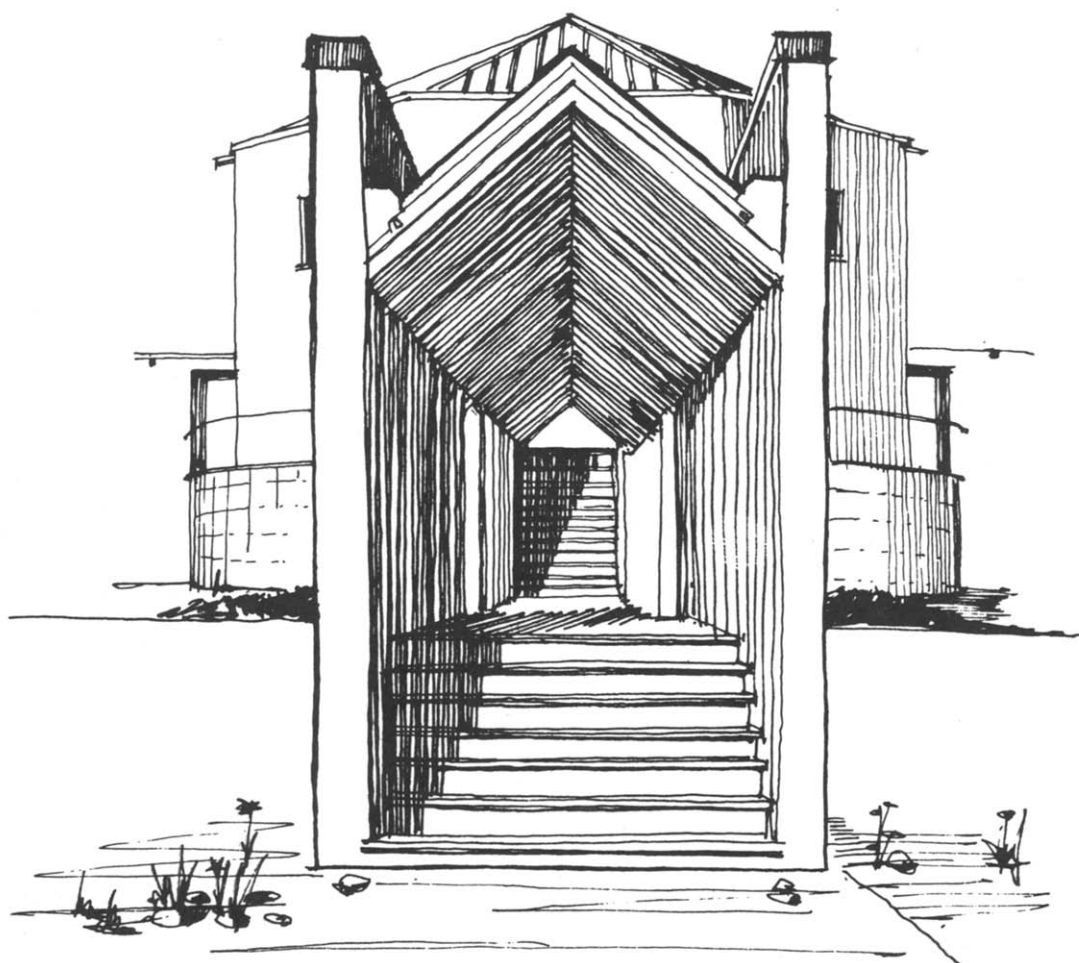


Figure 4.

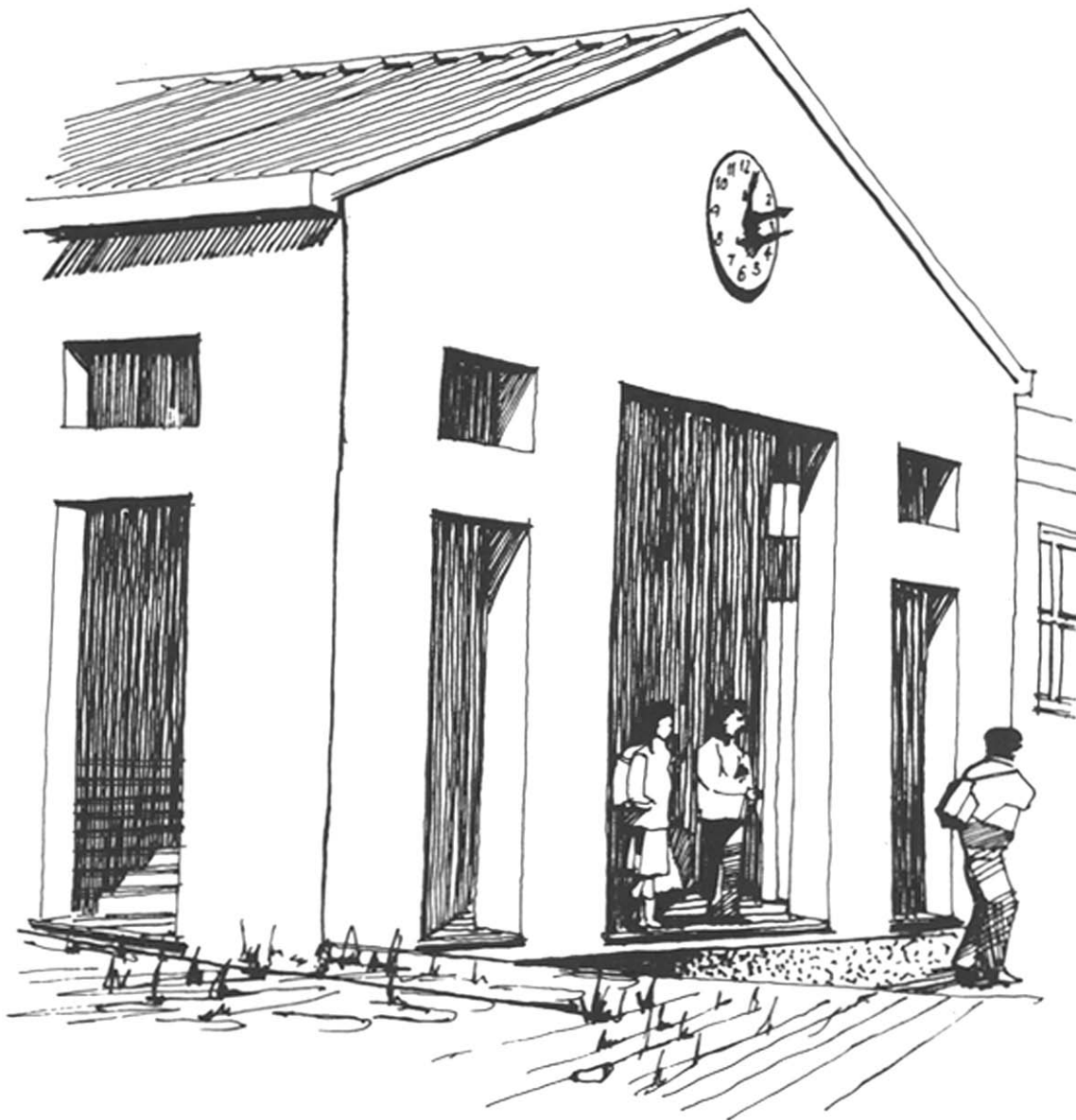


Figure 5a.

embrace of a *savant* caste; one that has passed beyond the mutual estrangement of producers from consumers, of architects from their publics.

There is, we fear, little prospect of a reaching out for such an architecture in the momentum of *Tendenza*. The social engineering intent of the early Modern Movement—among its exponents' more extravagant conceits—has been rejected; so, indeed, has the utopian, even socialist commitment of its enthusiasts. Architects now relegate architecture to the margins of social life. As a case in point, Rossi, in a lecture on his work (April 1978), claimed that the aim of his projects is to produce "total freedom"; by which, according to a report on the event⁷, he meant that,

... only by making architecture independent and autonomous, concerned only with its own internal substance and laws, can the ideal of freedom be returned clearly and unmistakably to its own domain ... that of political action and civic exercise.

Architecture, then, is to be freed of the ideal of freedom.

The anguish of architecture, the misery of modern culture is, pending "a great popular movement", to continue. Architectural concerns are to be restricted to unspecified "small things"—"great things are no longer possible". Architects (scientists, artists) are to be released from the obligation of political engagement; after all, the "buildings ... that are realized are always those of the dominant class".

The trajectory of *La Tendenza* is distressingly clear—towards an architecture of social detachment, of patrician-like indifference. Towards an architecture of alienation. The silence of those whom we seek, the stillness of absented subjects, deafens.

NOTES

- 1 See, however, p 169 "... in fact I have never spoken of an absolute autonomy of architecture ... I have primarily been concerned with establishing some of the characteristic propositions of architecture". Here, as elsewhere in *The Architecture of the City*, one might be excused for finding



Figure 5b.

Rossi's discrepant, his inconsistent statements as puzzling as his apparent reluctance to clarify from what architecture is to be considered autonomous—and whether 'absolutely' or relatively

2 In addition to the instances cited earlier in our text, see also the arguments that Rossi presents on p 27, 97, 113, 120 and 159

3 These themes do not exhaust those mentioned in *A Scientific Autobiography*. A comprehensive discussion of the book would, on our view, also call for an examination of his concept, "the analogous city"—see, for instance, p 71 and pp 81–82. For further material on this notion, see, for example, the essay 'An analogical architecture' in O'Regan, J (Ed) Aldo Rossi, *Selected Writings and Projects Architectural Design*, London (1983) pp 59–64

4 For an assessment of the formative influence which Rossi's writings have had on Tendenza design see D'Amoto, C 'Fifteen years after the publication of *The Architecture of the City* by Aldo Rossi: the contribution of urban studies to the autonomy of architecture' *The Harvard Architecture Review* Vol 3 (Winter 1984) pp 83–92

5 For the source of this 'quotation' see Davidson, P 'Rossi at Broni' *Building Design* (21 January 1983) p 14 and 15

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5 *ibid* p 41

6 Klee, P *On Modern Art* Faber Paperbacks, London (1984) p 54 and 55

7 Silveti, J 'On realism in architecture' *The Harvard Architecture Review* Vol 1 (Spring 1980) p 30

POSTSCRIPT

Readers will, no doubt, have noted that we share a number of Roderick Lawrence's reservations about *The Architecture of the City* (*Design Studies* Vol 6 No 3 pp 141–149). However, we are far, far less convinced of Rossi's (and, indeed, of the Neo-Rationalist, the Tendenza) contribution to knowledge, to the interpretative understanding that must underpin socially responsive and, above all, socially accountable design practices.