



Aldo Rossi. San Cataldo
Cemetery, Modena, 1971-78.
Photo: Andy Filarski.

That Obscure Object of Desire: Autobiography and Repetition in the Work of Aldo Rossi

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There is no theory that is not a fragment, carefully prepared, of some autobiography.

—Paul Valéry

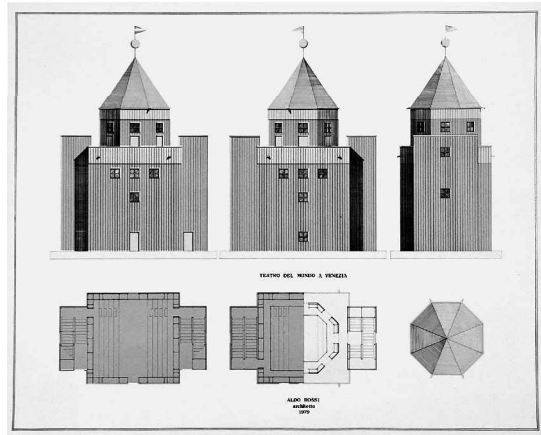
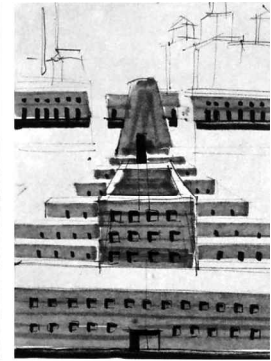
Toward the midpoint of *A Scientific Autobiography* and within the space of a couple of pages, the Italian architect Aldo Rossi repeats the phrase “the compulsion to repeat” three times. The first occurrence follows the observation that when he sees his most recent project—a temporary floating theater for the Venetian lagoon—he also sees the projects at Modena and Cuneo. To the self-addressed question—is this stasis a condition of development?—he replies, “The compulsion to repeat also represents a lack of hope, but it now seems to me that to make the same thing again so that each time it turns out to be different is a difficult exercise, as difficult as looking at things and repeating them.”¹ This ambiguous claim is followed by the charge that change characterizes inconsistency.² When the “compulsion to repeat” appears again, it is couched in almost identical terms, without elaboration or reference to what the reader assumes to be its psychoanalytical underpinning. In fact, throughout the text the psychoanalytical is more spurned than overtly embraced.³

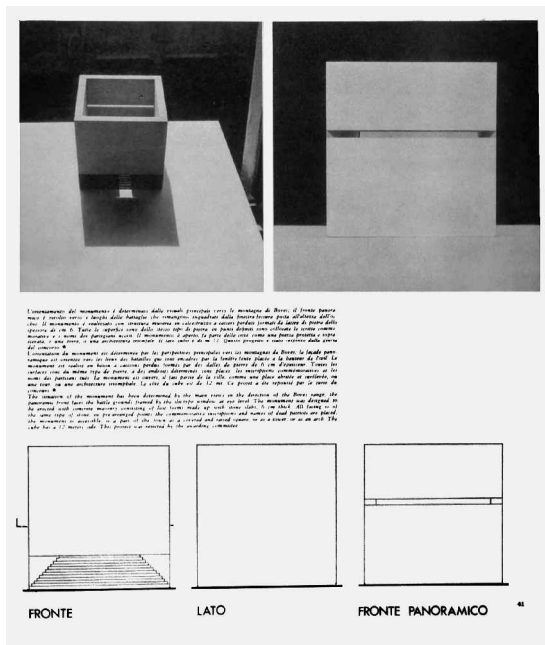
The second encounter with the “compulsion to repeat” reinforces the first assertion and emphasizes its importance to the activity of making. The mention of the same three projects—the floating theater for Venice, the cemetery at Modena, and the monument for Cuneo—elicits the following response: “The compulsion to repeat may manifest a lack of hope, but it seems that to continue to make the same thing over and over in order to arrive at different results is the unique freedom to discover.”⁴ Here repeating fulfills a productive function. To make the same form or idea is a decision consciously taken by the author, the aim of which is to produce difference. Further along in the paragraph Rossi identifies the formal trait he sees shared by all three projects: a cubic archetype-form. Rossi’s claim that to repeat this form over and over begets difference and that within this repetition lies a unique

opportunity to discover begs the question: What is to be discovered? In the first pass at a definition Rossi implies that repeating has a formal mimetic aspect. We understand that he is trying to repeat an ideal architectural form, a cube. It is the impossibility of making the same form that allows something new to emerge from within the chosen form. In the next pass, repeating the same is posited as an activity aimed at achieving difference. To repeat is thus turned about in dialectical fashion.

The third clear reference affirms Rossi's use of repetition to describe a physical activity and as the description of an aesthetic-conceptual mode. Rossi cites as precedent a self-referential moment in Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* to claim that the appearance of fragments from an earlier work within a new one is not a sign of imprisonment but of choice and as such indicates a degree of freedom. If we surmise that an author's freedom lies in repeating a particular composition, then the choice to repeat a previously used or known form posits an idea of creative self freed from the burden of inventing anew. Recalling Rossi's admonition that the pursuit of change is a mark of inconsistency, then the activity of repeating can be interpreted as a stance taken against this. The search for new architectural forms that reflect our experience of the world can be understood as a constituent element of modernist ideology. From this viewpoint Rossi's choice to repeat may be considered an attempt to resist the ever begetting production and consumption of the new. Still it is not clear whether the mechanism at work is the repeated form or the act of repeating itself. Furthermore, to say that repeating offers a degree of freedom is equivocal at best; it does not render repetition as a fulfilling creative ritual. How does repeating elicit freedom and discovery? To what is this degree of freedom opposed? What monolithic unfreedom does Rossi imagine an architect must face?

These three moments of repetition serve as a point of departure from which to query Aldo Rossi's professed propensity to repeat. Within the *Autobiography* not only does the word repetition appear frequently, but as textual strategy repetition determines the readerly experience as much as words determine the content. Repetition structures the text within a broader sensibility, and as such it suggests an epistemological armature might be in place.





Opposite, top left: San Cataldo Cemetery, Modena, 1971–78.
Photo: Andy Filarski.

Opposite, top right: San Cataldo Cemetery, Modena 1971–78.
Published in *Casabella* 372 (December 1972).

Opposite, bottom: Teatro del Mondo, Venezia, 1979. Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture / Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal.

Above: Monument to the Resistance at Cuneo, 1962.
Published in *Casabella* 276 (June 1963).

This armature has an ambiguous function; that is, it both explains and deflects explanation. Repetition makes mere redundancy seem intentional and apparently meaningful. Repetition serves to rationalize an architectural practice that by 1981 had displayed only subtle changes within a repertoire of simple geometric forms. Alternatively, the “compulsion to repeat” turns one’s attention to unconscious processes to explain the relation of the self to the making of architecture and to account for the experience of objects by a historical subject.⁵ The “compulsion to repeat” also deflects or turns away from reasoning the work within subjectivity per se toward a cause, an event, an objective fact, something beyond the sub-

ject that might have sponsored the symptom of repetition. To discover the cause is to account for what Rossi views as his lack of development and his desire to forget architecture.⁶

By offering what the reader assumes to be a psychoanalytic concept as interpretative lens, Rossi shifts the grounds for his architectural reasoning from the conscious and rational to the realm of the unconscious and irrational. This move is somewhat curious given that Rossi is best remembered as the architect whose thinking on architecture is indebted to late enlightenment architecture. In the 1970s his theory of architecture sponsored “La Tendenza” and became a whole school based on the idea of rational architecture. Rossi jettisons this rationalist perspective for the task of autobiography and takes up an interpretative mode akin to the process of psychoanalysis. It is a calculated choice. By suggesting that the “compulsion to repeat” governs his aesthetic production, Rossi is able to dispel with the censorship that marks conscious, rational processes. Through this displacement and without abdicating rational ground, Rossi admits something of the unknowable to the autobiography of his projects. In other words, the “compulsion to repeat” allows him to conjure the unexplainable as part of his design process in seemingly scientific terms without slipping into narcissistic solipsism. The necessity of maintaining high rational ground and of quelling interpretations based on notions of the “fetish of the creative life” is a debt held over from his intellectual formation within the progressive intellectual culture of Italian communism during the 1950s.⁷

It is Rossi’s attachment to his past that repetition is called upon to resolve in the present. In this case it follows that Freud’s conception of repetition as the expression of the instincts motivated “to restore organic life to an earlier state of things, an earlier condition which has been abandoned,” is adequate to the task at hand.⁸

Freud's exemplar of repetition is the child's game of Fort-Da. He explains the child's repetitive actions as an attempt to master "powerful impressions more thoroughly."⁹ Repeating is interpreted as an activity aimed at subduing unpleasurable experience; for example, of the departure of a loved one.¹⁰ In contrast, the child-like joy of repetition as the experience of something identical, although not very plausible in Freud's view, certainly can be entertained as an aspect of the creative process. Given these parameters, Rossi's repetition might be interpreted rather literally as a means to master unresolved aspirations from the past or to retrieve ideas from the past. In either view the symptom signals a compensation for a loss or lack of fulfillment experienced in the present. Still, repetition might indeed be a productive ritual: repeating might take once-held ideas and beliefs whose historical formation has been surpassed and bring them into the present in a new form. These ideas may not function well in the present if they remain in their original conception, but by means of the "compulsion to repeat" they are updated, reconfigured, and made useful to the author-architect. If the aim underlying all of the above is, in Freudian terms, a wish fulfillment, then it seems plausible that the objective of Rossi's repetition is the fulfillment of an unrealized desire.¹¹

The Autobiography

Rossi began notes for an autobiography around 1971.¹² As a composed object the book holds some clues to his attachment to repetition. At a structural level the text is repetitious to the degree that the English manuscript translator recommended changes based on the fact he found the text "repetitious and elliptical."¹³ The narrative follows neither a linear argument nor does it establish a chronology of development of life events or architectural projects. It is descriptive and composed of anecdotes strung together in an associational, noncausal manner. Despite this loose structure, Rossi tells us that he detests "arbitrary disorder that is indifferent to order," a statement that strikes the reader as slightly disingenuous.¹⁴ But this assertion is followed up by a modification that "disorder, if limited and somehow honest, might best correspond to our state of mind," reinforcing the turn to a psychoanalytical explanation of the mental apparatus and its functions to account for Rossi's making of architecture.¹⁵

The *Autobiography* is replete with philosophical and literary references calculated to substantiate if not to overdetermine the import of certain events and ideas to the author. These references are chosen with an eye for gathering in an apparently nonrepetitive manner a density about extant ideas or figures of thought. They are instances of repetition in that they function in effect to repeat. Take, for example, Rossi's citation of Max Planck's *Scientific*

Autobiography. Rossi reiterates Planck's retelling of a lesson on the principle of conservation of energy: the energy it takes to heave a boulder on top of a house remains stored up latent in the block until one day the boulder drops upon an unsuspecting passerby and the inertial energy is unleashed.¹⁶ For Rossi this anecdote is about death; for Planck it demonstrates a physical law. Rossi's preoccupation with death is evident within the first few pages of the text, yet his invocation of a law of thermodynamics to speak about death seems a little crudely drawn. Nevertheless there is a psychoanalytical connection between death, the conservation of energy, and repetition. The concept of the conservation of energy lays the ground for a metaphorical use in psychoanalytic thought, and here Rossi's reference takes on a complexity and richness relevant to the job of telling the autobiography of his projects.

From a psychoanalytical point of view the concept of cathexis is pivotal to understanding how the mental apparatus functions. This principle is explained metaphorically in terms of the conservation of energy, where the psyche is viewed in terms of the economy of a closed system of energy. When balanced, excitation is constant or low within the system; and when imbalanced, the result is psychic pathology. Simply put, psychical energy originating from the instincts can become cathected, loaded, or attached to an idea or to a group of ideas or an object.¹⁷ Pathological cathexis—inappropriate loading causing symptoms—can be cured by means of discharge, a kind of redistribution of energy. For Freud, cure is achieved through talk therapy, which reestablishes the “real connection between the memory and event” that perpetrated the misloading.¹⁸ While ideas might be decathected, there is some doubt that objects can be discharged.¹⁹ In a more elevated and positive sense the phenomena of cathexis accounts for displacement, as when a “positive load is attributed to an object or an idea” and they are made “pregnant with value.”²⁰ One of the root assumptions is that pleasure—balanced or low state of excitation—is pursued in order to keep unpleasure in check.²¹ Repeating is the attempt to discharge or to disable excitation, and thus discharge is pleasurable because it eliminates intense excitation.²² Nevertheless, as the title *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* suggests, something other than pleasure drives repetition. Freud recognized that the desire for the cessation of excitation was in effect an instinctual aim to return the organism to an inorganic state. Repeating with the desire for quiescence is a force that resists change and development. In the *Autobiography*, Rossi openly declares his intent to achieve a stasis, a silencing of architecture.²³

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud examined the idea of repeating as a symptom expressing the general character of the instincts, that is, their conservation.²⁴ The symptom is manifest in

“obsessional rituals,” repeated actions, and strives to reproduce “certain elements of a past conflict” in the attempt to conquer them in the present.²⁵ The act of repeating is impelled by a desire to master unresolved psychic debris and also to conserve it. In repeating, the subject does not experience a welling up of the past but rather the activity seems fully determined by events in the present. In repetition, something historical is brought forth in another form despite the fact that both the activity and causal event appear ahistorical. Repetition is an attempt to totalize within a symbolic fragment or activity, and in totalizing—here think of Rossi’s architecture—it binds and makes it silent and ahistorical.

That repeating works to interrupt the experience of history as linear and progressive is substantiated through Rossi’s references to Stendhal in the *Autobiography*. Rossi discovered in Stendhal’s *Life of Henry Brulard* a repetitive narrative model that makes complex the idea of history as a pure chronology of time, events, and places.²⁶ Stendhal’s autobiography is a curious compilation of narrative, lists, and explanatory sketches of architecture and landscape. These drawings do not merely illustrate the text but function as locational diagrams depicting real existing places as deformed by the author’s memories of events in time.²⁷ This indexical function thrusts doubt upon the word as sufficient expression of an event, its memory, or the psychic life of the author. For Rossi, Stendhal’s drawings were a “graphic variation of the handwritten manuscript” that demonstrated a “technique that lies between handwriting and drawing.”²⁸ In this way they registered as a signature.

Stendhal’s drawings inserted within the text are integral to understanding his autobiography as a whole. Rossi’s *Autobiography* is appended by drawings of old and current projects. Each drawing is signed and dated as having been executed between 1980 and 1981 despite the actual dates of the original designs. This redrawing—a repetition—renders all projects equal and in the present tense. Some projects are presented in isolation; others are collected within montage-like assemblies. Rossi’s recognizable drawing technique, a bold outline, a style of drawing situated between caricature and expressionism—imprints the self on simple forms.²⁹ The hand of the architect is made evident through the fetishization of line, and this line renders the form personal. For example, the redrawing of the competition proposal for a *Monument to the Resistance at Cuneo* is a case of simple repetition, in the sense of a more or less faithful redrawing of an old project. Originally a collaborative project presented in standard measured drawings

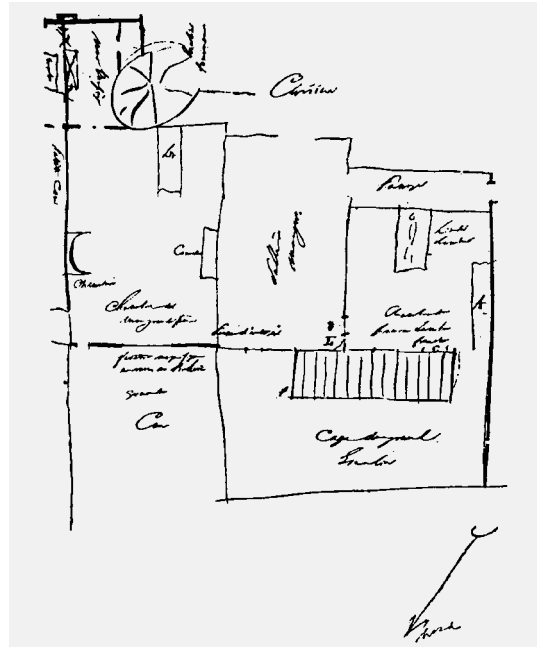
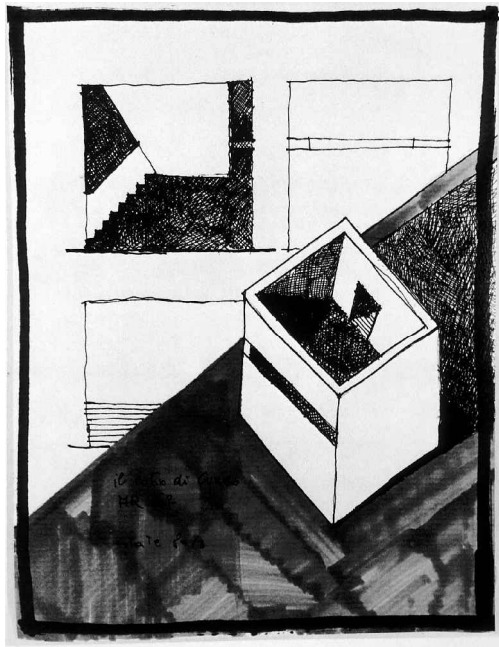


Illustration from Maurice Stendhal, *The Life of Henry Brulard*.



Aldo Rossi, Monument to the Resistance for Cuneo. Illustration from *A Scientific Biography* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981).

of axonometric view, plan and section, Rossi represented it in his stylized, thick black line, minus the measurements.³⁰ Scaleless and without reference to a physical site, it no longer reads as a proposal for built form but as an ahistorical representation of an authored idea. Through repetition it is rendered equivalent to other projects in the autobiography's appendix.³¹ It becomes ahistorical because it lacks *tempo*—as in time specificity or in the chronology of Rossi's work—but is suffused with *tempo* in the sense of atmosphere and implied reference to an ideal typology.³² This atmosphere does not partake of historical reality. It is a cube, an ideal geometric type having some metaphysical import; but redrawn in this manner, it becomes a figment of the architect's imagination.

According to Rossi, Stendhal's "disregard for formal and dimensional aspects" of drawing inspired his investigations into architectural typology.³³ The shared lack of concern for measurement is clear, but how Stendhal's drawings support the idea of type appears to stretch the concept of typology. That Rossi's architectural thought revolves about the idea of type is well established. The 1962 publication of Giulio Carlo Argan's text *On the Typology of Architecture*, summarizing his interpretation of the nineteenth century theorist Quatremère de Quincy's definition of type is considered the key text to introduce type to a generation of young Italian architects.³⁴ The enthusiastic reception for typological studies within Italian architecture in the early 1960s arose from a fundamental concern to define the boundaries of architecture as a discipline and to found a theory of the architectural project. Type became the cornerstone of Rossi's architectural theory which set to counter, at least in his early speculations, an idea of architecture reduced to function and standards cloaked in a uniform style. Architects such as Rossi were critical of the representation of architecture in terms of a "causal connection between architectural forms and the economic and technical evolution of society."³⁵ Rossi sought a *teoria dell'architettura* and *teoria della progettazione* to support an idea of architecture that held epistemological value not reducible to technical criteria.³⁶ Type was called upon to perform both as an explanatory tool and an interpretive device. As an analytic tool, type enabled the objective documentation of material changes within the city over time. As interpretive device, the materialist notion of type was linked to the metaphysical realm and to theories of perception. Thus type was both a conceptual device and of practical applicability. The conjoining of the idea of type and its practice had a political dimension; that is, it was viewed positively as the near equivalent to the Marxist ideal of theory into praxis.

Argan argued for a positive conception of type as an abstraction but not merely as such. Type was useful to architects because it had the capacity to bring together the sociohistorical moment and the absolute past.³⁷ Since architectural types had been passed down through centuries by means of treatises, it was “legitimate to postulate the question of typology as a function of both the historical process of architecture and also of the thinking and working processes of the individual architect.”³⁸ In other words, type displayed both the arc of total history and the specificity of the historical moment. Argan argued that type presented and synthesized social-historical and individual experience in the concrete present. Type could implant the contents of historical specificity within absolute history and yet not be, in the stylistic sense of revivalism, historicist. For Argan, the past is neutralized in type as an “absolute within the present,” and thus type presents the past as an ahistorical abstract form in the present.³⁹ This argument held particular appeal for young Italian architects concerned with the dialectical relation between architectural form and social-historical content since type made possible an architectural expression of totality.

Following Quatremère, Argan contended that type was not a preset image or a model to be copied and thus relevant to the practical making of objects. In contrast to a model, type was notional, a schema carrying the residue of all previously made forms.⁴⁰ Type was an “interior structure” where all specific value, character, and quality had been sublimated.⁴¹ Type contained infinite formal possibilities and thus when put into practice by an architect would always produce different results or architectures with “no obvious resemblance to each other.”⁴² The influence of Argan on Rossi is clear when Rossi writes in the *Autobiography*: “Nothing can yield more unforeseen results than a repetitive mechanism. And no mechanisms seem more repetitive in their typological aspects than the house, public buildings and the theater.”⁴³

Types emerge by means of a regression, as if to strip existing built forms to their “common root form.”⁴⁴ While functional and programmatic organization determined the criteria that define building type as a convention, the essence of type as a metaphysical concept is construed by means of “complex ideological, religious or practical demands that arise in a given historical condition.”⁴⁵ Thus the limits of architecture are defined by the specificity of a society and its historical moment. This shift in emphasis from history to ideology demarcates Argan's updating of the term to make it relevant for architects of the postwar period.

For Argan the schema of a given type was transformed by means of the architect's creative process. Through the creative process, however ill defined, the contents of the social historical moment moved through and deformed type as form. According to Argan: “But if the ‘type,’ is a schema or a grid and the schema inevitably

embodies a moment of rigidity or inertia, the presence of such a schema needs to be explained in the context of an artist's creative process."⁴⁶ Through the creative process, type is deformed and bound to the sociohistorical present. Argan's explanation of type as a dialectical device mediated by the creative process was at best vague and thus highly suggestive.

Let us return to Rossi's claim that change is the mark of inconsistency and ask how an architecture based on type might resist the superficial effects of stylistic change.⁴⁷ Given that modernism, bourgeois avant-gardism in particular, was predicated on the idea of the new, it placed a premium on the architect as innovator and author of the new. Rossi adamantly rejected the modernist tradition of the pursuit of the new.⁴⁸ Type not only freed architects from merely representing function or technique or from the conditioning of aprioristic forms but also from re-presenting the sheer immediacy of extant conditions. The idea of type focused Rossi's search to construct a theory that established architecture within the tradition of its historic vocation. A theory of architecture based on type was poised resolutely against the modality of change and the antihistorical ideology of canonical Modernism. It was based on the belief in the epistemological value of architecture and its capacity to produce knowledge. To choose type as a fundamental criteria for a theory of architecture was to position oneself against the bourgeois fetishization of the individual creative life and to uphold architecture as an autonomous discipline composed of objective, historical givens.

Argan's explanation of type and Rossi's critique of modernism share strong affiliation with Georg Lukács's critique of modern literature and his characterization of the role of typicality in realist literature. Put simply, in Lukács's view content determined form, and content was the author's responsibility to portray sociohistorical conditions.⁴⁹ For Lukács it was a writer's "view of the world, the ideology underlying work which constituted intention, the formative principle underlying style."⁵⁰ Authors who chose psychologism over the objective portrayal of reality or "exalted man's subjectivity" were in fact impoverishing both subjectivity and reality.⁵¹ To describe reality as the experience of flux "paradoxically represented reality as static."⁵² This artificial separation of inner and outer realities irreconcilably split them asunder and destroyed the potential for knowledge of reality as totality, a "living world inseparable from man himself."⁵³ For Lukács, type had dialectical potential wherein the emblematic type-form conserves and resists, but by means of its interaction with sociohistorical content it mutates and becomes the concretely new. For Rossi, type stood as a totalizing gesture against the modality of the new, aesthetic expressions based on subjective inclinations or on psychological experience. His conception of type was

Top: View of Tiburtino Housing, Rome. Published in *Casabella Continuità* 215 (April–May 1957).

Bottom: Bottega d'Erasmus, Turin, 1953–56. Photo: Mary Louise Lobsinger.

grounded on Lukács's characterization of the typical in literature.

Rossi's conception of type as a vehicle for mediating form and content, as the analytic and conceptual link between *teoria della progettazione* and *teoria dell'architettura*, was indebted to the Italian intellectual milieu of the 1950s and early 1960s.⁵⁴ Lukács was one of many influences to which the architect was exposed and whose concepts were employed to launch a critique of modernism as a movement. Nevertheless, in the 1950s it was Lukács's realism that galvanized a cultural shift from Neorealism to more realistic analyses of Italian society. For young architects it provided the means to speculate on a realist architecture.

Architecture and Realism circa 1955

In 1955, while architecture students at the Polytechnic of Milan, Aldo Rossi and Guido Canella drafted a text titled *Per una architettura realista*.⁵⁵ They took as their point of departure a literary-philosophical debate that preoccupied the Italian left, particularly communist literary critics, artists, and philosophers throughout the 1950s.⁵⁶ The debate turned about the question: What were the constituent criteria for a realist aesthetic that could function as a critical technique and artistic process? What kind of realism could nurture the evolution of a contemporary national aesthetic? What kind of realism could lead from the populist inspired aesthetic of Neorealism toward the building of a sophisticated democratic culture?⁵⁷ Following the contours of the debate, the young architects agreed that Neorealism in literature, cinema, and figurative production had been a culturally necessary moment that captured the “dense material meaning and collective experience of the resistance” and the liberation.⁵⁸ In cinema, for example, Roberto Rossellini's *Rome: Open City* [*Roma: Città aperta*] of 1945 presented a people unified in the heroic struggle against Nazi occupation.⁵⁹ The subject matter of Neorealist works exposed the plight of the popular classes, the farmers, and the downtrodden workers as in Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* [*Ladri di biciclette*]. The aim of the Neorealists was to strip away the patinated formalist aesthetics of fascist propaganda to reveal Italian society for what it was in reality. The Neorealist mode depicted Italy as a barely unified country comprising wide disparities in wealth, education, and culture, a country where the economic base was not urban and industrial but rural and agricultural.⁶⁰

Technically, Neorealism privileged the use of local dialect; for example, in Luchino Visconti's seminal work, *The Earth Trembles* [*La terra trema*], the dialogue was spoken in the Sicilian dialect of the untrained actors. In architecture, dialect was notionally transformed into the hybrid employ of unsophisticated vernacular and modern forms. In literature the Neorealist mode laid emphasis on the description of empirical facts considered to



be indicative of the author's engagement with reality.⁶¹ This raising of the factual to the status of fetish was supported by an idea of history as chronicle or *cronaca*, a mode best described as “the proverbial one damn thing after another.”⁶² In architecture a Neorealist aesthetic was defined as a seemingly casual approach to plans and building faades or as spontaneous and empirically derived forms.⁶³ Neorealist architecture was program specific; it was used for state-supported housing estates [*casa popolare*]. For Rossi and Canella, the adherence to *cronaca* in 1955 was a “self-satisfied contemplation” of superficial explorations, an “emasculated verbosity,” a “mechanical means of producing reheated emotions.”⁶⁴ For architects, the task at hand was to rid themselves of this descriptive and passive approach to reality and to find a means of actively engaging architecture in dialectical relation with the sociohistorical present.

Rossi and Canella targeted Italian Rationalism as an arid, formalist aesthetic supported by abstract theory. They deemed organicism, along with phenomenological readings of the environment, as “senile and sterile.”⁶⁵ Manfredo Tafuri

has characterized the broad range of experimentation within Italian architecture of the 1950s as an “excessive, hyper-linguistic activity indicative of an exasperated urgency to communicate.”⁶⁶ This free play of architectural expression can be conveniently bracketed by the rubrics of Neorealism of the early 1950s and Neo-liberty of the mid- to late 1950s. The antiformalism of Neorealism is best represented by the *Tiburtino* housing project in Rome, and the so-called Neo-liberty, referring to the bourgeois “*lo stile liberty*” of the early 1900s, is best represented by the *Bottega d’Erasmus* in Turin.⁶⁷ If the historical moment of Neorealism had passed and its natu-

ralism was now somewhat suspect, if eclecticism or those tendencies laying claim to historical context were deemed across the board as formalist, decadent, and abstract, what options were available to architects willing to confront dialectically the problem of form and content? The problem was only superficially stylistic. It was more deeply a theoretical issue impelled by the imperative to find a method of design and of architectural reasoning that would produce a realist architecture; that is, an architecture that would *narrate*, not merely *describe*, the social-historical contents of the times. Poised against past architectures, against the bad immediacy of the linguistic excesses of recent architecture, a realist architecture was defined through tradition and within disciplinary history made relevant to an emerging democratic nation.

Following Lukács and Antonio Gramsci, the young architects identified the nineteenth century as representative of a historical moment when a revolutionary bourgeoisie and class aims coincided with the pursuits of a national-popular culture. The translation to architecture implied a turn toward nineteenth century iconography.⁶⁸ In a prescient move they enlist, without citing a source, typicality, morphology, and narration or concepts associated with Lukácsian literary realism.⁶⁹ They argued that by means of narration typicality was linked to tradition within history. The young architects offer neither further explanation of the terminology nor architectural examples, yet what they had in mind can be easily imagined. During the mid-fifties both were affiliated with a group of students at the Polytechnic in Milan whose design work gained them the derisive nickname *i giovani delle colonne* for the presence of classicizing elements.⁷⁰ In the *Autobiography*, Rossi twice refers with affection to this period and his attachment to Soviet realism and the social milieu of the left.⁷¹ No doubt it was his youthful alignment with the intellectual culture of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) that gave substance to what otherwise might have turned into institutionalized Soviet realism or become a groundless stylistic scavenger hunt like much of the architectural experimentation of the 1950s.⁷² From these formative years Rossi's pursuit of architectural realism evolved into a clearly framed intention: to found a theory of architecture and projection analogically equivalent to the dialectic between form and content as espoused in Lukács's literary realism.

The postwar Italian reception of Lukács's aesthetics has been well debated and documented.⁷³ In a 1953 review of *Saggi sul realismo* (*Essays on Realism*), the philosopher Antonio Banfi argued that two aspects of Lukács theory contributed to raising the aesthetic political debates in Italian communism.⁷⁴ First was the conception of art as the reflection of reality.⁷⁵ Art was not a symbolic or abstract universal form, rather by means of Lukács's conception of typicality, individual and social traits were conjoined as

“representative products of their culture and its ideology.”⁷⁶ Art as a historical fact was the second aspect and following Lukács this meant that art played an important part in the dialectical rapport between the economic-social structure and the cultural superstructure.⁷⁷ For Lukács, type—as in character type—arose from the ferment of the times; it reflected the historical moment, and thus a work of fiction based on types was always already within history and a reflection of the sociohistorical moment. Type was not a model nor a predetermined form; rather, by means of the historical process, type mutates and sublimates content into new forms.⁷⁸ Type put form and content into dialectical relation.⁷⁹ For Banfi, Lukács's criteria made for a realist aesthetic that presented the possibility of both an objective artistic process and a method enabling the critical examination of art.⁸⁰

Rossi's thinking about type can be traced from this departure from literary realism to a formal and conceptual interpretation of architectural type through two of many book reviews he wrote for *Casabella continuità*. In his review of Emil Kaufmann's *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier* and *Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu*, Rossi follows the fate of type from Jacques-François Blondel's conception of ideal purity and autonomy of form to Claude-Nicholas Ledoux's symbolic representation of social and political relations to Jean-Nicholas-Louis Durand's instrumental use of type as standard.⁸¹ The decline from Blondel's “exalted rationalism” to reified form occurs in confrontation with the rise of new social and economic forms: the bourgeoisie and capitalism.⁸²

In his review of François Calì's *L'ordine greco (The Greek Order)*, Rossi acknowledges an appreciation for the simplicity and repeatability of the Greek Doric and this form as the collocation of an idea and ideal.⁸³ For Calì, it was the turn toward a metaphysics of number that usurped analogy for symmetry and reduced proportion to mere mathematical exactitude.⁸⁴ For Rossi, the fate of the Doric provided an object lesson for architecture: “The tendency to make modern architecture today a world with rapport stable and unalterable is a *symptom* of its decadence. *Decadence* that not only takes into account the originality but presupposes and determines rationality.”⁸⁵ The reduction of architecture to universal standard forms was a symptom of decadence. Decadence is manifest in the static relation of form to the world. The logic underpinning modernism is tautological. It looks functional because it is functional: it originates from the world of demand and represents that world back to itself. Its rationale is both means and ends. Limited to a means-and-ends rationale, reasoning is confined to a static and conventionalized rationalism. This is nothing less than the reification of architecture, the evidence of the decay of reason, a decline set in motion in the early nineteenth century when rationalized building assemblies determined type to be that

form best suited to the construction grid. Architecture as such is mere commodity within capitalist production.

Furthermore, from these reviews we can detect in Rossi's thinking an early inclination toward repetition. Repetition as a positive mode is evident in the Doric, where repeating the same begets difference. Rossi observed that the perfection of the Greek Doric order lay in its capacity to remain something untranslatable, simple, and at the same time complex, something that imitates itself in every reoccurrence despite diverse interpretations or geographical locations.⁸⁶ Alternatively, the collapse of type into the repeatable standard is evidence of the reification of an idea decisively split off from thought. Following Lukács, reification is the experience of reality as static—where relations between subjects and objects are frozen in a nondialectical contemplation.⁸⁷ Type as an antecedent, unchangeable standard is divorced from the reality of social processes.

We know that by the early 1960s Rossi employed a more precise understanding of the architectural—design and analytical—equivalents of literary type. Type as discussed above gave Rossi a scientific means—that is, a logic with both material and conceptual dimensions—to transcribe the literary idea of typicality and a realist critical method into a theory of architecture. Collaborative studies on typology based on analytical drawings that traced morphological change in Italian cities put in place the physical evidence to support a materialist critical apparatus.⁸⁸ A *teoria della progettazione* and a *teoria dell'architettura*, a theory and a practice of architecture, could now be defined. The studies from this period form the backbone of Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*. Although it deserves a much longer explication than is possible in this context, suffice to say for the present discussion that the book marks a turning point in Rossi's architectural reasoning. In the *Autobiography*, Rossi claims that *The Architecture of the City* marked a definitive moment—he had said all he could.⁸⁹ Rossi describes, in a manner both proud and apologetic, the drive propelling his early research as akin to that of an army general. He states that in the search for “fixed laws of typology,” he “scorned memories, set aside sentiments in a single-minded pursuit to discover a system governing architecture and cities.”⁹⁰ He sought “to explain architecture in terms of the givens that are its proper domain,” which meant “posing the problem in a scientific way, removing any superstructural bombast and rhetoric which encrusted it during the years of the avant-garde.”⁹¹ In this book Rossi “translated history into his own history”; in other words, collective History usurped the historicity of the subject. In this self-analysis Rossi is critical of his youthful scientism.⁹² He found that objects resisted scientification and that the creative process could not be fully reconciled to his architectural theory. Nor could science

account for, as he puts it, the impenetrability of things. Rossi's aim to found a theory of architecture that could reestablish the discipline on rational foundations remained unrealized. In the *Autobiography* his desire to discover "a typology without history" may well refer to the freedom that repetition offered: to be attached to this hope and to recognize its passing.⁹³

Type, Totality, and Repetition

Rossi never relinquished his attachment to the idea of a theory of architecture conjoined to a theory of projection where type mediates between form and content.⁹⁴ In 1969 Rossi summarized his view of typology as

the manifestation of the typical in architecture, [which] is linked to reality and national character. . . . Typology is best defined as a particular aspect of architecture, originally conditioned and modified by social-historical evolution. . . . The individualization of typology represents in architecture the reflection of reality in historical form. The character of a realist architecture consists in identifying the typical.⁹⁵

Rossi's notes for lessons taught in the late 1960s and early 1970s clearly articulate his reading of Lukács's theories on realism in relation to his conception of architectural realism.⁹⁶ What remains to be examined is the relation of type to the compulsion to repeat. I propose to interpret Rossi's repetition as a symptom sponsored by his attempt to reconcile at least two opposing aims. The first of these involves the recognition that the unrealized ideals embodied in his youthful embrace of realism still prevail. The second involves his realization that a scientific approach to objective architectural reality denied that which cannot be suppressed in the creative process: the self and subjectivity. There is a strong ideological conflict between these aims, since adherence to the first disavows a place for the self and the kind of subjectivity that wells forth through intuition, associations, and memories.

In the *Autobiography*, Rossi offers few occasions to glean the reason for his repetition as compensation. He writes, "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."⁹⁷ This statement belongs to the cultural voice of the first of Rossi's two aims, as does the following:

There is a close relationship between my initial search to reestablish the discipline of architecture and my final result of dissolving or forgetting it. It seems to me that modern architecture, as it originally presented itself, was a set of vague notions dominated by secondhand sociology, a polit-

ical deception, and a suspect aestheticism. The beautiful illusion of the Modern Movement, so reasoned and moderate, was shattered under the violent yet definitive collapse caused by bombings of the Second World War.⁹⁸

Here Rossi's aspiration for the cultural vocation of architecture is situated within a grand narrative to which the self is necessarily subjected. The frustration of this aspiration to found a realist architecture is both personal and part of a larger collective loss. This lament is well understood within postwar critiques of modernism and the consequences of modernity as a social-political phenomena.⁹⁹ Rossi writes:

But the question of the fragment is very important since it may be that only ruins express a fact completely. Photographs of cities during war, sections of apartments, broken toys . . . I am thinking of a unity, or a system, made solely of reassembled fragments. Perhaps only a great popular movement can give us the sense of an overall design; today we are forced to stop ourselves at certain things. I am convinced, however, that architecture as *totality*, as comprehensive project, as an overall framework, is certainly more important and, in the final analysis, more beautiful. But it happens that historical obstacles—in every way parallel to psychological blocks or symptoms—hinder every reconstruction. As a result, I believe that there can be no true compensation, and that maybe the only thing possible is the addition that is somewhere between logic and biography.¹⁰⁰

Expressed here is a deep and inconsolable disenchantment, a loss that cannot be compensated. The dream of architecture as expressed totality is not possible. Following Lukács, architectural totality would formally lay bare the fundamental nature of capitalist society; that is, the contemplative relation of subjects to things, the thing-like or reified relationships of social members.¹⁰¹ An architecture of totality would bring theory into practice and be, unlike avant-garde rhetoric, revolutionary in that it truly possessed reality.¹⁰² It would be a dialectical architecture where the dynamic of form and content would reveal subject and object in the historical process.¹⁰³ Architectural thought would become active and practical. This would be an architecture that could *dereify* the experience of reality. For Rossi this cultural aim is lost but not abandoned: "And this has also meant knowing that the general condition must be experienced personally, often through small things, because the possibility of great ones has been historically precluded."¹⁰⁴ He repeats "that great things have been precluded" three times in the *Autobiography*. Each repetition is contextualized by his "detest" for "arbitrary disorder" and his

turn from disorder to find a means that might “correspond most closely to our state of mind.”¹⁰⁵ Given this, the second aim that repetition attempts to quell is the irreconcilability of subject to object. Rossi writes, “It must have been around 1968 that a general subversion of culture strangely revealed itself in my intellectual development. I recovered aspects of myself which had belonged to me in the past but which I had let fall into neglect.”¹⁰⁶ Given the prohibition of the notion of the originary bourgeois subject, it would seem rather difficult for Rossi to ideologically rehabilitate the relation of the subject within the creative process without slipping into a regressive and intellectually suspect position. For Rossi, the act of repetition might mediate the perceived loss of the grand aim of architecture and the welling up of the subjective. Repetition then works to master the unreconcilable, to extinguish the unpleasure of dissonant yet unsuppressible aims.

In 1963 Rossi’s work was described as linear, as emaciated and engaged in “an inflexible process of essentialization.”¹⁰⁷ Rossi explained: “Certain ideas that you receive, they remain fixed, they seem natural with what you make, you continue to exercise them, making them without every now and then a verification.”¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, he declared “only personal positions, . . . choices,” are of interest in the search “to fix a rigid world and a few objects, a world already stabilized in its givens.”¹⁰⁹ In 1963 the difficulty for Rossi lay with the description of type, “for one may have an idea of an ideal and believe that this ideal type can be described, but in the moment of description, it reveals our incapacity and in the end we can only approach the idea.”¹¹⁰ In this formulation we understand that inhering in type is an architectural ideal as abstract potential unavailable for discharge. When aligned with Rossi’s lament for a lost totality, repetition appears to be compelled by the unfulfilled promise of type as emblematic device to reveal architecture as totality. This is both a positive interpretation, situating the desire for an ideal embedded in a belief about architecture and its intellectual perfection and a negative interpretation, for it seems it is always already impossible to achieve or know the ideal.¹¹¹ The ideal is always already reified, and the knowledge of this compels repetition.

If the aim of Rossi’s repetition is to decathect the idea and to redistribute its energy, then the act of repeating leads to quiescence, to silence and forgetting. Rossi observed: “To forget architecture, or any proposition, was the objective of my unchanging choice of a typology of pictorial and graphic construction in which the graphics became confused with handwriting, as in certain highly developed forms of graphic obsession where the marks may be seen as either drawing or writing.”¹¹² Repeating in order to forget is compelled by that which will not be put to rest: Rossi’s desire for an architectural whole. The loss of a truly objective

relation to reality is revealed in the symptom of repetition. Each redrawing attempts to unleash the subject-object of totality. But each drawing also reveals, by the hand of the architect, the gap between “subject and expression,” between idea and object.¹¹³ For Rossi, to see a certain form prompts the “compulsion to repeat.” He sees in the architectural object his fetishized ideal type and in it “the representation of the past with the desire of the present.”¹¹⁴ Here we can interpret Rossi's compulsion to repeat as activity conjured to discharge the idea-cathected image. But this is not the only goal. In 1963 Rossi's process is set on automatic, without the need to return to original ideas, but by 1981 his rationale for repetition had changed drastically. If the aim is to forget architecture, then perhaps to repeat is to attempt to decathect architecture of all past ideological overtures and thus to allow it to become a “vehicle for an event we desire.”¹¹⁵ Rossi writes, “to be significant, architecture must be forgotten, or must only present an image for reverence which subsequently becomes confounded with memories.”¹¹⁶ For Rossi, this is not “careless” forgetting but rather an “oblique” forgetting, the kind that repetition might permit.¹¹⁷ By means of repetition Rossi is able to quell the unreconciled and to desire totality while acknowledging its impossibility. Repetition permits the coexistence of contradictory aims, an adherence to the realist denial of subjective expression for objective totality and the acquiescence to the subjective within the creative process and in architecture. For without desire, Rossi writes, it is impossible to create; without desire, no certainty remains, and the imagination itself is reduced to a commodity.¹¹⁸

Notes

The subject matter of this article is part of a larger investigation addressed in my dissertation, *Antinomies of Realism: Italian Architecture circa 1954–1972* (Harvard University, forthcoming Fall 2002). Versions of the chapter received much appreciated readings from Professors K. Michael Hays, Sarah Williams Goldhagen, Adrian Forty, and Kenneth Hayes. I would like to thank Paolo Scrivano for ongoing critical discussions on postwar Italian architecture. I also thank Giovanni Durbiano for making available Guido Canella's and Aldo Rossi's *Per una architettura realista*. Research presented in this article was supported by a Carter Manny Merit Award from the Graham Foundation.

1. Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), 53.
2. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 53.
3. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 8, 62. For Rossi's rejection of psychological interpretations, see, for example, Aldo Rossi, "Architettura per i musei," in G. Canella et al., *Teoria della progettazione architettonica* (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1968), 123–137.
4. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 54.
5. Rossi repeats no less than eight times that he is telling the autobiography of his projects.
6. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 43, *passim*.
7. On the fetish of creative life, see Francesco Dal Co, "Criticism and Design," *Oppositions* 13 (Summer 1978): 1–16. On the cultural mandate of the *Partito comunista italiano* (PCI), see Nicoletta Misler, *La via italiana al realismo: La politica culturale artistica del P.C.I. dal 1944 al 1956* (Milan: Gabriele Mazzotta Editore, 1973); and Albertina Vittoria, *Togliatti e gli intellettuali: Storia dell'Istituto Gramsci negli anni cinquanta e sessanta* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1992).
8. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1961), 43.
9. Freud, 13–15.
10. Freud, 42.
11. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 43. "The connotations of the cabins of Elba and the Little Scientific Theater contain in themselves so much that is private and autobiographical that they permit me to pursue what would otherwise remain fixated within a self-consuming desire for the past."
12. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 1. Reference to autobiography and repetition as aspects of the creative process appear in Rossi's writing as early as 1966. Notes for an autobiography, Note *autobiografiche sulla formazione ecc.*, December 1971 and an early manuscript titled *Autobiografia scientifica*, 3 March 1975, are preserved in the Aldo Rossi Papers, Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (880319). See Box 20, Folders 187, 190.
13. The Aldo Rossi Papers, Box 10, Folder 159. That the examples I employ as indicative of repetition were identified by the translator and yet remained in the finished published version is significant.
14. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 23, repeated on 83.
15. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 23.
16. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 1. See Max Planck, *A Scientific Autobiography and Other Papers*, trans. Frank Goynor (London: Williams and Norgate Ltd., 1950), 13.
17. J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), 62.
18. Laplanche and Pontalis, 62.
19. Laplanche and Pontalis, 64.

20. Laplanche and Pontalis, 64.
21. Freud, 5–6, 76–77.
22. Freud, 76.
23. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 5, 11.
24. Laplanche and Pontalis, 78.
25. Laplanche and Pontalis, 78.
26. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 6.
27. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 19.
28. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 6.
29. Rossi's pictorial style is frequently compared to Mario Sironi or Giorgio de Chirico. Rossi's early drawn works also share qualities with Milanese realist painters such as Renato Guttuso or Attilio Rossi.
30. Architects of the proposal for a monument to the resistance at Cuneo were Gian Ugo Polesello, Luca Meda, and Rossi.
31. In effect, Rossi's repetitive redrawing can be seen as contrary to his narration; it undoes the sense of specificity of time and place, annihilates the particularity of memories, moments, architectures, and landscapes.
32. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 1. *Tempo* can refer to both time and to atmosphere.
33. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 6.
34. Giulio Carlo Argan, "On the Typology of Architecture," trans. Joseph Rykwert, *Architectural Design* 33, no. 12 (December 1963): 564–565; first published as "Sul concetto di tipologia architettonica," in *Festschrift für Hans Sedlmayr*, ed. Karl Oettinger and Mohammed Rassem (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1962), 96–101. Saverio Muratori's studies on typology were an important influence on architects in the early 1960s. See Muratori, *Studi per un'operante storia urbana di Venezia* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello stato, 1960).
35. Alan Colquhoun, "Introduction: Modern Architecture and Historicity," in *Essays in Architectural Criticism: Modern Architectural Change and Historical Change* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 17.
36. *Teoria della progettazione* translates as "theory of the project."
37. Argan, 564.
38. Argan, 564.
39. Argan, 564–565.
40. Argan, 565.
41. Argan, 564.
42. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 30.
43. Argan, 565.
44. Argan, 565.
45. Argan, 564.
46. Argan, 565.
47. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 53.
48. For Rossi's critique of the architect as innovator, see "Quale tradizione?" the Aldo Rossi Papers. Rossi's text is influenced by Antonio Gramsci, "Rationalismo, Concetto romantico dell'innovatore," in *Passato e presente* (Turin: Einaudi, 1951).
49. Georg Lukács, "Reportage or Portrayal?" in *Essays on Realism*, trans. David Fernbach (Cambridge: MIT Press 1980), 50–60.
50. Georg Lukács, "The Ideology of Modernism," in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, trans. John Mander and Necke Mander (London: Merlin Press, 1979), 19.
51. Lukács, "Ideology," 24.
52. Lukács, "Ideology," 35, 39.

53. Lukács, "Ideology," 39.
54. Architects such as E.N. Rogers, G. Samonà, L. Coscenza, C. Melograni, C. Aymonino, G. Canella, and Rossi contributed articles to left-leaning and communist reviews such as *Rinascità* and *Il contemporaneo* and journals such as *Società*, *Aut aut*, *Comunità*, and *Il verri*.
55. Guido Canella and Aldo Rossi, *Per una architettura realista*. Guido Canella Archive. This document can also be found under the title Architettura e realismo in the Aldo Rossi Papers, Box 9, Folder 151.
56. For example, see Cesare Luporini, "Per una nozione di Realismo," *Il contemporaneo* 4 (17 April 1954): 3; Luigi Chiarini, "Il realismo di Visconti: La polemica e la storia," *Il contemporaneo* 9 (26 February 1955): 9; Federico Fellini, "Neorealismo," *Il contemporaneo* 15 (2 April 1955): 4; "Libertà dal neorealismo," *Il contemporaneo* 20 (14 May 1955): 2; "Conclusioni del dibattito sul neorealismo," *Il contemporaneo* 22 (28 May 1955): 10; Valentino Gerratana, "Lukács e la lotta per il realismo," *Società* (1953), 546–563; Franco Fortini, "Il 'Metello' di Pratolini," *Comunità* 30 (April 1955): 54–56; Carlo Muscetta, Carlo Salinari, and Piero Pucci, "Discussione e conclusioni su 'Metello' e il neorealismo di Carlo Salinari," *Società* (1956), 590–622; and Romano Luporini, "Note per una storia della questione del realismo," *Nuovi argomenti* 45–46 (May–August 1975): 246–307. The debate was ignited by the departure of two representative Neorealists in their recent work—Luchino Visconti's film *Senso* and Vasco Pratolini's novel *Metello*—from subject matter and narrative mode typical of Neorealism.
57. Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the P.C.I. turned the party's policy toward cultural issues as a strategy for building a postfascist national identity.
58. Canella and Rossi, 3.
59. P. Adams Sitney, *Vital Crises in Italian Cinema* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 2.
60. On the developmental discrepancies between southern and northern Italy, see S.M. Keeny, *A Mission Is Born* (Rome: Tipografia F.lli Borgia, 1947); Frederick G. Friedmann, "Osservazioni sul Mondo Contadino dell'Italia Meridionale," *Quaderni di sociologia* 3 (1952): 148–161; and Paolo Braghin, ed., *Inchiesta sulla Miseria in Italia (1951–1952): Materiali della Commissione Parlamentare* (Turin: Einaudi, 1978).
61. On Neorealist literature, see, for example, Carlo Bo, ed., *Inchiesta sul neorealismo* (Edizioni Radio Italiana, 1951); Alberto Asor Rosa, *Scrittori e popolo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966); and Walter Siti, *Il neorealismo nella poesia Italiana, 1941–1956* (Turin: Einaudi, 1980). On the relation of Neorealism and architecture, see also Bruno Reichlin, "Figures of Neorealism in Italian Architecture (Part 1)," *Grey Room* 05 (Fall 2001): 78–101, and "Figures of Neorealism in Italian Architecture (Part 2)," *Grey Room* 06 (Winter 2002): 110–133.
62. Timothy Bahti, *Allegories of History: Literary Historiography after Hegel* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 70.
63. Canella and Rossi, 4.
64. Canella and Rossi, 4–5.
65. Canella and Rossi, 4. The continued influence of Benedetto Croce and various interpretations of phenomenology affected many of the competing architectural theories, from E.N. Rogers's notion of preexistent environment to Bruno Zevi's organic architecture.
66. Manfredo Tafuri, "Architettura e realismo," in *Architettura moderna: L'avventura delle idee 1750–1980*, ed. Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani (Milan: Electa, 1965), 123.
67. *Quartiere Ina-Casa al Tiburtino* (Rome, 1949–1954): Architects Ludovico Quaroni and Mario Ridolfi, with Carlo Aymonino, Carlo Melograni, Carlo Chiarini,

Mario Fiorentino, Federico Gorio, Piero Maria Lugli, Giancarlo Menichetti, Giulio Rinaldi, and Michele Valori; *Bottega d'Erasmus* (Turin, 1953–1956): Architects Roberto Gabetti and Aimaro Isola. See my “Monstrous Fruit: The Excess of Italian Neo-liberty,” *Thresholds* 23 (Fall 2001): 44–51.

68. See Aldo Rossi, “Il concetto di tradizione nell'architettura neoclassica milanese,” *Società* 3 (1956): 474–493.

69. Canella and Rossi, 6–7. The argument is reminiscent of Gramsci's dictate concerning nationalist popular culture.

70. *I giovani delle colonne* translates as “the young of the columns.” See Giancarlo De Carlo, “Problemi concreti per i giovani delle colonne,” *Casabella continuità* 204 (February–March 1954): 83.

71. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 40, 74. Rossi's 1954 visit to Russia resulted in the propagandistic article “La coscienza di ‘dirigere’ la natura,” in *La voce comunista* (1954), 5.

72. Contrary to Rossi's aestheticism, communist architects such as Gabriele Mucchi held more social-political aims for architecture. See Mucchi's critique of noncommunist architects such as Rogers and Zevi in “Verso un movimento realista in architettura,” *Realismo* 18 (January–February 1954): 2–3. For Rossi's participation in at least three P.C.I. conferences during the 1950s, see, for example, Aldo Rossi Papers, Box 1, Folders 1, 6; Box 10, Folder 152.

73. The favorable reception of Lukácsian realism among Italian intellectuals lies with the rejection of the historicism and idealist aesthetics of Benedetto Croce. For example, see discussions in *Società* in the early 1950s; or Galvano Della Volpe, “I limiti del gusto crociano,” *Filmcritica* (1949). On the reception of Lukács, for example, see M. Caprara, “La polemica sull'opera di Giorgio Lukács,” *Società* (September 1950), 495; Georg Lukács, “Il sonno della ragione,” *Il contemporaneo* 4 (22 January 1955): 3–4; Georg Lukács, “Sciolokhov e la tradizione epica,” *Il contemporaneo* 9 (26 February 1955): 3; Georg Lukács, “L'anima borghese,” *Il contemporaneo* 23 (4 June 1955): 3–4; Franco Fortini “Lukács in Italia,” *Officina* 3 (1959): 77–101; and Riccardo Merolla, “Lukács e la cultura marxista in Italia,” *Angelus novus* 15–18 (1969): 1–66.

74. Antonio Banfi, “A proposito di Lukács e del realismo in arte,” *Realismo* 18 (January–February 1954): 6. A copy remains preserved in the Aldo Rossi Papers, Box 2, Folder 49.

75. Banfi, 6. Georg Lukács, *Balzac, Stendhal, Zola e Nagy orosz realisták*, published in Italian as *Saggi sul realismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1950).

76. Stuart Sim, *Georg Lukács* (London: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1994), 42.

77. Banfi, 6.

78. Banfi, 6.

79. See Lukács, “Reportage or Portrayal?” 59.

80. Banfi, 6.

81. Aldo Rossi, “Emil Kaufmann e l'architettura dell'illuminismo,” *Casabella continuità* 222 (October 1958): 42–47.

82. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 47.

83. Aldo Rossi, “L'Ordine greco,” *Casabella continuità* 228 (June 1959): 15–16.

84. Rossi, “L'Ordine greco,” 16.

85. Rossi, “L'Ordine greco,” 16 (emphasis added).

86. Rossi, “L'Ordine greco,” 16.

87. Fredric Jameson, “The Case of Georg Lukács,” in *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 188.

88. As a teaching assistant at the University of Venice during the early 1960s, Rossi contributed to collaborative studies on city form. See C. Aymonino et al., *Aspetti e problemi dell tipologia edilizia* (Venice, 1964); and Carlo Aymonino

et al., *La Città di Padova: Saggio di analisi urbana* (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1970). Rossi pursued independent research with support of the Istituto Lombardo per gli studi economici e sociali. See Aldo Rossi, *Contributo al problema dei rapporti tra tipologia edilizia e morfologia urbana*, ILSES [Istituto Lombardo per gli studi economici e sociali], 4 (Milan, 1964).

89. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 15.
90. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 15–16.
91. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 83.
92. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 36.
93. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 16.
94. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 40, 83.
95. Architettura del realismo, 14; Aldo Rossi Papers, Box 1, Folder 18.
96. Architettura del realismo, 3; Aldo Rossi Papers, Box, 1, Folder 18. See reference to Lukács's two-volume *Estetica*, trans. Anna Marietti Solmi and Fausto Codino (Turin: Einaudi, 1970).
97. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 20.
98. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 82.
99. See Rossi's citation of Lukács, *Breve storia della letteratura tedesca dal '700 ad oggi* (Turin: Einaudi, 1956) and Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1954), in "Una critica che respingiamo," *Casabella continuità* 219 (May 1958): 32–35.
100. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 8 (emphasis added).
101. Jameson, "The Case of Georg Lukács," 185.
102. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 2–3.
103. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 3.
104. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 83.
105. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 23, 84.
106. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 81. Around 1968 Rossi was both reading Lukács and investigating Surrealism, a somewhat subversive and counterintuitive intellectual partnering.
107. Francesco Tentori, "D'o~ venons-nous? Qui sommes-nous? O~ allons-nous?" in *Aspetti dell'arte contemporanea*, ed. A. Bandera, S. Benedetti, E. Crispolti, and P. Portoghesi (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1963), 268.
108. Tentori, "D'o~ venons-nous?" 268.
109. Tentori, "D'o~ venons-nous?" 269.
110. Tentori, "D'o~ venons-nous?" 269.
111. Lukács's idealism—his adherence to the Hegelian "the real is rational and rational is real"—was a point of dispute among Italian critics and philosophers. See Galvano Della Volpe, "Contraddizioni dell'estetica di Lukács: A proposito del dibattito sul Realismo socialista," *Filmcritica* (1954); and Carlo Salinari et al., "Problemi del realismo in Italia," *Il contemporaneo* 11 (February–March 1959): 3–59.
112. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 43.
113. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 44.
114. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 72.
115. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 3.
116. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 45.
117. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 37.
118. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 35, 72.

