

8) *Writing* **Architecture** series



ARCHITECTURE'S DESIRE

READING THE LATE AVANT-GARDE

K. MICHAEL HAYS

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K. MICHAEL HAYS

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ANALOGY

Mobilized explicitly against the scientism not only of modernist functionalism but also of the remaining positivist design methodologies and operations research of the 1960s, which sought to arrive at optimal architectural organizations mathematically and avoid the slippery problems of architectural representation and translation, *Meaning in Architecture* (1969), edited by Charles Jencks and George Baird, proposed a preliminary semiotics of architecture elaborating the basic structuralist insight that buildings are not simply physical supports but artifacts with meaning—signs dispersed across some larger social text.¹ The repercussions of this and similar structuralizations of architecture as critiques of functionalist and positivist dogmas would prove enormous, extending over the next decade of architecture theory, and the essays in *Meaning in Architecture* are but early examples of what would quickly become a widespread search for a system of architectural meaning.

But if the structuralist projection into architecture was perhaps inevitable (structuralism is designed to manage all cultural systems of signification) and in certain ways already latent in earlier models of architectural interpretation (those of Emil Kaufmann, John Summerson, or Rudolf Wittkower, for example), the most pertinent and fruitful level of homology between architecture and language still had to be decided. In other words, what was to be the scale of architecture's structure? Is an individual work or group of works like a language, or is architecture as a whole structured like a language? The first view has affinities with traditional

treatments of buildings as organic units whose origins and intentions of formation must be elucidated, whereas the second view, which the editors of *Meaning in Architecture* adopt and which would become the **disciplinary norm**, shifts the interpretive vocation considerably. No longer is the interpreter's task to say *what* the individual work means (any more than it is the linguist's task to render the meanings of individual sentences); **rather, it is to show *how* the codes and conventions of architecture enable objects to produce meaning.** Questions are raised about users' and readers' expectations, about how a structure of rules enters into and directs the design of a work, about how any architectural "utterance" is a shared one, having been spoken already and therefore shot through with qualities and values—questions, in short, about architecture's public, ideological life. **Moreover, the goal or limit condition of the theoretical project, in this view, is to analyze not just buildings or projects but the whole of the system of architectural signification.**

George Baird's essay from that volume, "*La Dimension Amoureuse* in Architecture," follows Roland Barthes's early semiotics to reveal some basic issues about the structure of architectural signification. First, if architecture as a whole is like a language (a specifically encoded grammar, or *langue*), then the individual work is a particular instantiation or effect of that generalized language (analogous to a speech act, or *parole*)—the architect cannot simply assign or take away meaning, and that meaning cannot be axiomatic.² **According to this semiotics, architecture is a readable text, and the protocols and parameters of its legibility are what we mean by *rhetoric*.** Rhetoric operates within the structure of shared expectations and demands a social, dialogical, even erotic relationship with the reader—Baird's "amorous dimension." But rhetoric is not simply a subjective expression. Its procedures are inseparable from processes of argument and justification with respect to the social function of making architectural sense.

The most productive dimension of Baird's essay (though he does not take full advantage of it) is his setting of Claude Perrault's concepts of positive and arbitrary beauty into active equivalence with the *langue/parole* system. For what is achieved in the complex fraction—positive beauty is to arbitrary beauty as *langue* is to *parole*—should not be understood as a simple simile of architecture as language; nor should it be understood in terms of the more complex assertion that the individual work of architecture must be perceived differentially against the network of the architectural system as a whole. For Perrault's positive beauty is applied not just to *an* architecture (the classical language, say, or some other specific style) but to *all* of architecture—to Architecture. The implication of the complex fraction is that any individual work of architecture, in all its contingency, locality, and arbitrariness, can be dissolved back into a specifically architectural but universal structured system—a symbolic order—of which it is a partial instantiation.

There is one more important corollary of this machinery. Though Baird does not mention it, his semiotic fraction is capable of generating out of its binaries a third term, which might articulate the reciprocal exchanges between the discursive network of architecture as a whole and the individual instances of that system—a kind of synthetic operator between the symbolic system and the specific architectural signifier. The reemergent notion of architectural typology attempts to do just that.³ The logic of types asserts that the various elements of architecture are not in themselves full of meaning: they are not items that have substantial content. Rather, they are relational forms, elements in a structured system on the same order and of the same relative scale as phonemes in language (or what Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his study of myth, called "mythemes").⁴ *Architectemes*, as we might call them, make up the basic mechanism of architectural thought: the distinctive, recurring combinations of such elemental units are types, and

the logic of their organization is typology. Few terms from the architecture theory of the late 1960s and early 1970s carry the same power as that of typology, and the reason, I suggest, lies in type's mediating position in architecture's imagination and symbolization.

A passage from Adorno's 1965 reflection on functionalism and architecture will help explain the work of imagination:

*Architecture inquires: how can a certain purpose become space; through which forms, which materials? All factors relate reciprocally to one another. Architectonic imagination is, according to this conception of it, the ability to articulate space purposefully. It permits purposes to become space. It constructs forms according to purposes. Conversely, space and the sense of space can become more than impoverished purpose only when imagination impregnates them with purposefulness. Imagination breaks out of the immanent connections of purpose, to which it owes its very existence.*⁵

Architectural imagination (*Einbildungskraft*, the work of making images and schemata) exceeds any empirical demand made on architecture with a form and an affective force beyond reason or end, form or function. Consider an example. Let us give the name *place* to the architectural affect of purpose-becoming-form, that is, to a hypothetically originary architectural condition. (At its most primitive level architecture has always been seen as a mimesis and an analogue of natural conditions: the accident of a tree branch falling across two trunks is turned into an entire system of support and measure; the continuation of a ridge line becomes a wall marking the territory of a group; the clearing of a field becomes a city.) **Architecture, or the vocation of architecture's imagination, then, is fundamentally the making of a place,**

where place is understood to have certain formal, dimensional properties—a space marked off as distinct—as well as a specific set of uses or purposes attached to it (hence, for example, a place of gathering, a place of worship, a commemorative place, a restful place, *Raumgefühl*). When confronted with a particular situation—a site, program, materials, and the like—architecture’s imagination enfolds all of its conditions into formal quanta, intensities, or architectemes and produces an analogue of the originary, purposeful, place-making condition of architecture.

In order for the purposeful qualities of this analogue to be put into relation, in order for the qualities to achieve expression, an autonomous system of organization is required—one that has internal consistency as well as external effect. Typology is one such system. Understood in this way, a typological analysis of architecture demands a rigorous attention to form as well as to the symbolic identification that extends outward from structure into externality and alterity in a proliferating chain of metonymic associations. This is where typology begins to trace the contours of architecture’s desire. For typology’s effort to grasp analytically the preanalytic and indeterminate conditions of architecture’s possibility (which is to say, its Other), or, put differently, to give form to that which brings architecture into being, is analogous to the desire to assimilate the desire of the Other to oneself: “Che vuoi?” (What do you want of me?), architecture asks of its Other, folding inward to question its own identity, incorporating its own distance from itself.⁶ Desire is the effort to maintain architecture as a subject together with that other world which is its surround and its origin and from which it remains forever apart.

Typology designates the paradoxical point at which architecture, whose inauguration is instrumentally directed, appears as a spontaneous, almost natural force (a residue of that originary union of form and purpose), which is not limited to any particular historical context since its exemplarity is found across places and

times. The assertion of the centrality of type is, then, an assertion of the reality of architectural appearance itself (and not merely some functional cause behind it)—of the *image* of architecture (the work of type is image-ination) as its symbolic identification as architecture. Rafael Moneo forcefully generalized the importance of typology and its mediatory potential in a structured field: “To understand the question of type is to understand the nature of the architectural object today. It is a question that cannot be avoided. The architectural object can no longer be considered as a single, isolated event because it is bounded by the world that surrounds it as well as by its history. It extends life to other objects by virtue of its specific architectural condition, thereby establishing a chain of related events in which it is possible to find common formal structures.”⁷

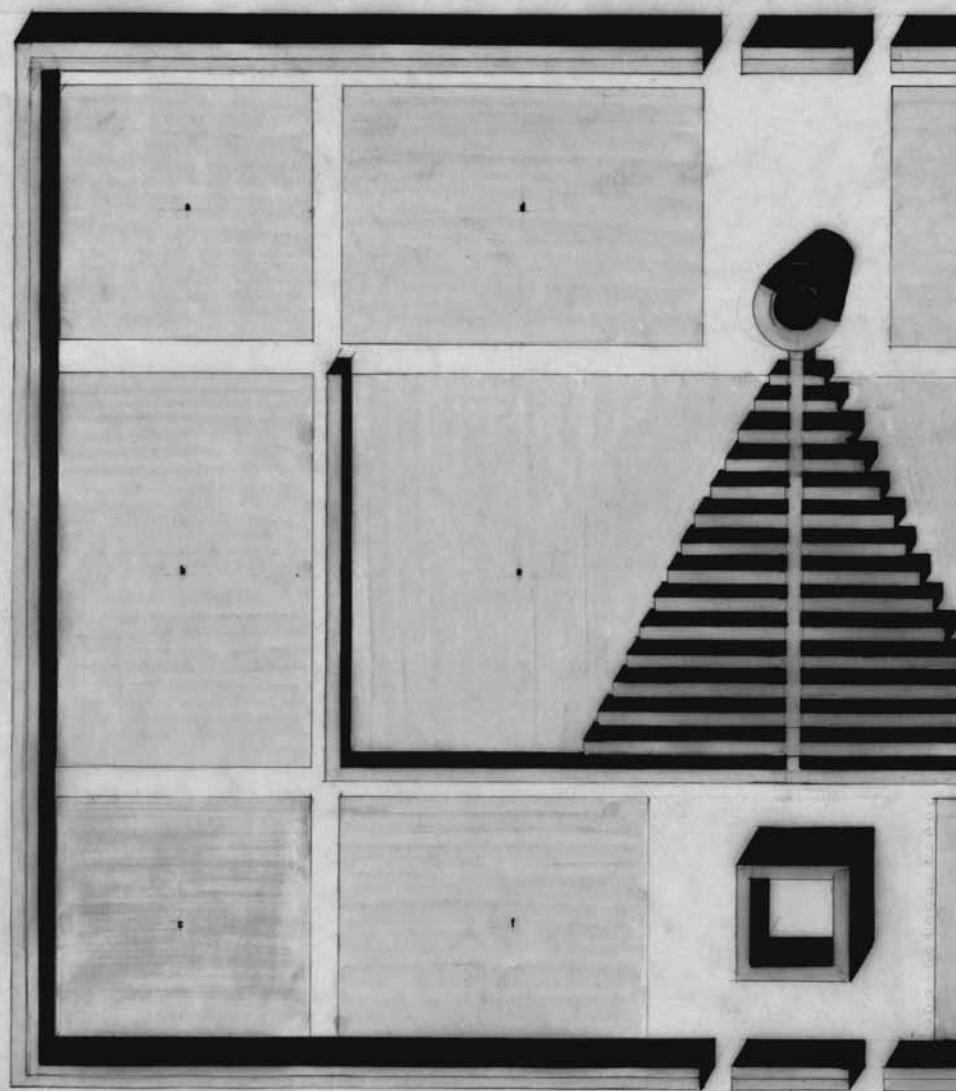
Moneo and other commentators of the period rightly place the work of Aldo Rossi at the center of this structuralization of architecture. Structuralist influences, especially of Lévi-Strauss, saturate Rossi’s 1966 *The Architecture of the City*; the elemental purity and formal logic of his work—its power as appearance, image, even illusion—are its most immediately apparent qualities; Rossi himself wrote that “the points specified by Ferdinand de Saussure for the development of linguistics can be translated into a program for the development of urban science.”⁸ What has not been sufficiently understood is how Rossi’s writings, drawings, and projects depart from and transform basic structuralist insights, refracting them through his intellectual formation in Marx and Freud, reorganizing them through his readings of Lukács and Adorno, and folding that mixture through his idiosyncratic poetics, rendering his work considerably more complex than standard structuralist-semiotic accounts can afford.

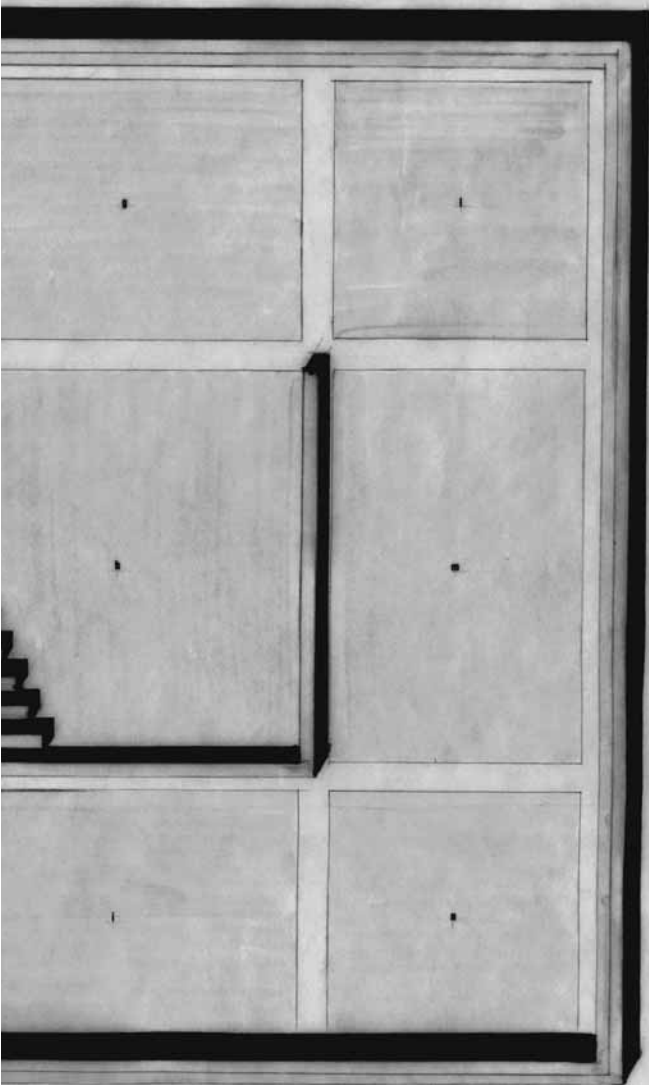
For one thing, those accounts assumed a conceptual distinction between the affirmative construction of meaning on the one hand and a grimly instrumentalist functionalism on the other, a

functionalism that, if not altogether meaningless, was uncommunicative and downright unsociable. Rossi's more dialectical understanding of architecture's system, however, allowed the recognition that new architectural events, experiences, and meanings are constituted not only in the reaffirmation of preexisting cultural codes but also by the specific ways that codes can be negated—spontaneously, by the ongoing effects of reification; programmatically, by changing performative and perceptual conventions and possibilities; or by design, through the ideological practice of the architect. His recognition of the multiple modes of negativity together with his inquiry into architecture's Imaginary and Symbolic orders makes Rossi a foundational figure for a theorization of the late avant-garde.⁹

Equally important is Rossi's specific conceptualization of architecture's structure. According to the standard account, architectural structure pertains essentially to the organization of architectural signifiers among themselves. An architectural type, then, as I have said, is a kind of mediator imposed between a substratum of codes, categories, customs, and conventions and the actual instance of design practice, a mediator through whose operation an architectural form comes into being as a structured material entity. While this account in all its different forms tends to presuppose some kind of social and historical reality beyond the typological operator, which serves as the type's most distant referent (not to say as a base for its superstructure), Rossi makes the more particular claim that the social and the historical are always already within the structure itself, that structure is both form and matter, that human history produces structure, and structure yields the social. In *The Architecture of the City*, he stages this as a kind of diachronic and synchronic unification:

In this book we have made use of the historical method from two different points of view. In the first, the city was





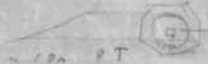
2.1

Aldo Rossi and Gianni Braghieri, Cemetery of San Cataldo, Modena, 1971, plan. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. **"The analogy with death is possible only when dealing with the finished object, with the end of all things."**

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71



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seen as a material artifact, a man-made object built over time and retaining the traces of time. . . . Cities become historical texts. . . . The second point of view sees history as the study of the actual formation and structure of urban artifacts. *It is complementary to the first and directly concerns not only the real structure of the city but also the idea that the city is a synthesis of a series of values.* Thus it concerns the *collective imagination.* . . . The idea of history as the structure of urban artifacts is affirmed by the continuities that exist in the deepest layers of urban structure, where certain fundamental characteristics that are common to the entire urban dynamic can be seen.¹⁰

The architecture of the city is the crucible of the *social Imaginary*, a highly differentiated condition that operates on different planes or levels of reality—among them is the structured plane of its own system of signification (what others call its deep structure, *langue*, or generative grammar), *which gives architecture its autonomy; a plane of historical, material manifestations in physical form (something like an archive of all past architectural events);* and a plane activated with a kind of organizing force or potential, an architecture-galvanic surface (“We can utilize the reference points of the existing city, placing them on a vast, illuminated surface: and thereby let architecture participate, little by little, in the creation of new events”)¹¹ that keeps the whole thing in motion. But there are others too. At different places in *The Architecture of the City* Rossi isolates these various planes—in sections entitled “Monuments and the Theory of Permanences,” “The Dynamic of Urban Elements,” “Processes of Transformation,” “Urban Ecology and Psychology,” “The Collective Memory,” “The City as Field of Application of Various Forces”; there are more. Typology here becomes not just a third term so much as a mobile mechanism of

production and analysis that can move through all of these levels. And the ideal sum of all the planes, or laminates—that unthinkable conflation—is what Rossi calls the “City,” which I capitalize here to signal its singular, almost mythical, status. For the City is architecture’s big Other—the order of the architectural-social Symbolic itself operating behind the typological Imaginary.¹²

A city, of course, is a sociomaterial object that we can experience and study directly, the most concrete of realities that architecture deals with. But for Rossi the City is an invisible and absent abstraction, an autonomous and presuppositional structure, a network of pure virtuality that nevertheless produces not only form but also moods, atmospheres, and affections. In his *Scientific Autobiography*, Rossi refers to the City as the very possibility of joining images, “a circle” of relationships “that is never closed,” “the unlimited *contamination* of things, of correspondences”; the City is a desiring production of correspondences and connections whose quarry is anamorphosis and shadow.¹³ The City is the object of architecture’s desire prior to any predication, which nevertheless enables and constrains every possible architectural creation and can be known through its architectural effects. While the City cannot be deduced from any single example of architecture, and every possible analogue of the City is necessarily partial and often contradictory, there is nevertheless no architecture that is not determined and legitimated by the City, which is the very structure of architecture’s tradition. For Rossi the City is something very like an architectural unconscious—the Other as both embodiment of the social substance and the site of the unconscious. In this regard it is interesting to recall Lacan’s famous quip, “The best image to sum up the unconscious is Baltimore in the early morning.”¹⁴ But with this it is important to add that Rossi, like Lacan, insists that this unconscious is precisely not subjective, not something with any individual psychic makeup. Rather, the

architectural unconscious is outside and collective, in the domain and material of signification itself.

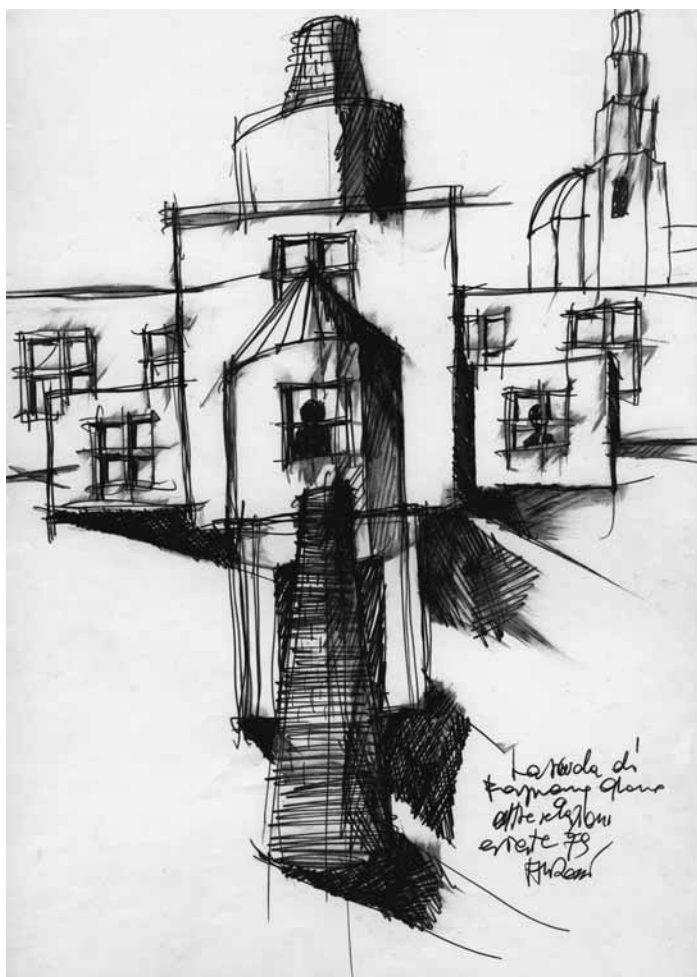
We can learn more about the concept of the City by isolating two related but different kinds of time operating in Rossi's peculiar theory of typology, two different temporal logics. First is the analysis of variance in what might be called the phenomenon of typological repetition and persistence. Herein lies the importance of Rossi's notion of "permanences," which tries to account for the persistence of certain spatial patterns in the urban fabric as material "signs of the past" as well as the persistence of a city's basic plan over vast periods of time and changes in use, even when monuments or sectors of a city are destroyed just to be rebuilt exactly as they were. The examples in *The Architecture of the City* are many, but Rossi dwells particularly on the large and complex Palazzo della Ragione in Padua and how it has successfully accommodated and encouraged different functions since the fifteenth century. Another case is the Roman amphitheater at Nîmes, which was transformed first into a fortress and then a small city of two thousand, with four gates and two churches inside its original walls. Both are examples of "propelling permanences," catalytic elements of the city whose powerful forms remain stable but whose functional variability contribute to the evolving process of urbanization and the production of new architectural experiences. There may also be "pathological permanences"—the Alhambra in Granada is Rossi's example—that function only as isolated, unalterable obstructions in the city, restricting rather than propelling programmatic differentiation.¹⁵

The correlate of typological persistence is another kind of chronicity that may be called the anteriority of typology, a logic of preclusion and process, of coming before. With this terminology I mean to capture the sense of mimetic folding and refolding of preexisting forms in Rossi's often-cited but exceedingly elliptical

illustration of the “analogous city,” which describes the originary site of architecture’s symbolization:

To illustrate this concept I gave the example of Canaletto’s fantasy view of Venice, a capriccio in which Palladio’s projects for the Ponte di Rialto, the Basilica of Vicenza, and the Palazzo Chiericati are set next to each other and described as if the painter were rendering an urban scene he had actually observed. These three Palladian monuments, none of which are actually in Venice (one is a project; the other two are in Vicenza), nevertheless constitute an analogous Venice formed of specific elements associated with the history of both architecture and the city. The geographical transposition of the monuments within the painting constitutes a city that we recognize, even though it is a place of purely architectural references. This example enabled me to demonstrate how a logical-formal operation could be translated into a design method and then into a hypothesis for a theory of architectural design in which the elements were preestablished and formally defined, but where the significance that sprung forth at the end of the operation was the authentic, unforeseen, and original meaning of the work.¹⁶

There is an epistemological claim made in this formulation insofar as the analogue is at once a means of analysis, a method of design, and a necessary prior condition for practice. Indeed, as a means of knowing, Rossi’s concept of analogy has a remarkable closeness to Lévi-Strauss’s *pensée sauvage*. For Lévi-Strauss’s complex and multimodal mind also responds to its situation on many levels simultaneously and “builds mental structures which facilitate an understanding of the world in as much as they resemble it. In this sense savage thought can be defined as



2.2

Aldo Rossi, *La scuola di Fagnano Olona*.

Altre relazioni, 1979, sketch.

Courtesy Fondazione Aldo Rossi.

analogical thought.”¹⁷ Analogical thought sorts the world into a series of structured oppositions and then proposes that each set of oppositions is analogically related to other sets insofar as their differences resemble one another. In Rossi’s project for the Modena cemetery (1971), for example, the difference between the individual tomb and the cemetery as a whole is the same as the difference between a house and a city, whereas the conic communal grave and the cubic die that is the sanctuary for the war dead are similarly analogous to the monuments and permanences of a city: homologies between systems of difference, isomorphic diagrams.¹⁸ Dimensions are of no importance in analogical thought since the order of the City is cognitively embedded in all architectural types of any scale. Rossi speaks of Diocletian’s Palace at Split, Croatia, as an example: “Split discovered in its own typological form an entire city, and thus the building came to refer analogically to the form of a city. This example is evidence that a single building can be designed by analogy to the city.”¹⁹ Exactly the same analogy is present in Rossi’s own designs, such as the elementary school at Fagnano Olona (1972–1976)—itself a small city with hallway-streets, piazza, public rotunda, and monumental steps—and even his drawings of “domestic landscapes,” which organize cigarette packs, tea pots, and furniture like urban fragments.²⁰

In this epistemological claim, the anteriority of typology is entirely consistent with the structuralist attempt to work out a theory of models constructed on the analogy with language, and with the presupposition that all thought must be conducted through and within the limits of an objective field in which every element occupies a preordained place. In a sense, the anteriority of types is a fundamentally Kantian conception (as is much of structuralism’s underpinning). For if architecture is structured like conceptual-objective thought itself and is an activity whose content is determinately social and socially use-

ful, it is precisely because architectural types mimic conceptual processes and social content at the level of form. Or, to put it in an even more Kantian way, the logic of types is autonomous in the sense that it provides the form for conceptual thought and social experience rather than being determined by them. Types “facilitate an understanding of the world in as much as they resemble it” (Lévi-Strauss). It is through this kind of thinking that we can understand, for example, Rossi’s fascination with Adolf Loos’s aphorism, “If we find a mound six feet long and three feet wide in the forest, formed into a pyramid, shaped by a shovel, we become serious and something in us says, ‘someone lies buried here.’ That is architecture.”²¹ The particular architectural image of the mound—the analogue—produces the affect of reverence. Rossi concludes, “The mound six feet long and three feet wide is an extremely intense and pure architecture precisely because it is identifiable in the artifact. It is only in the history of architecture that a separation between the original element and its various forms occurred. From this separation, which the ancient world seemingly resolved forever, derives the universally acknowledged character of permanence of those first forms.”²²

But if there is an elective affinity between the language of type and the social world, there is also an opacity, an unbridgeable gap revealed in type’s analogical work. Think of the different sameness of the cube in Rossi’s Cuneo, Modena, and Teatro del Mondo projects, or the repetitive walls of Modena’s ossuaries, the same type as the wall of apartments in the Gallarate. Think of the way these figures open to a singularity and a difference that cannot be subsumed within the rule of representation. Rossi recounts an exchange between Freud and Carl Jung, in which the later explains that “‘logical’ thought is what is expressed in words directed to the outside world in the form of discourse. ‘Analogical’ thought is sensed yet unreal, imagined yet silent; it is not a discourse but rather a mediation on theses of the past, an interior monologue.

Logical thought is 'thinking in words.' Analogical thought is archaic, unexpressed, and practically inexpressible in words."²³ A type, logical and analogical at the same time, perpetually excludes what it seeks to possess, which is its own identity as conferred by the City. *That is its desire.* This alone explains why Rossi's work, in all its dismaying aesthetic impoverishment, compels commentators to declare that it produces memories. Rossi himself insists as much in his elaboration on the above quotation: "I believe I have found in this definition [of analogy] a different sense of history conceived not simply as fact but rather as a series of things, of affective objects to be used by the memory or in design."²⁴ The radical lack at the heart of desire is scanned as "memory" by the mind habituated to language.

Rossi's concept of analogy also makes an ontological claim: architecture can come only from architecture. A type is cataphoric and anaphoric, pointing backward and forward at the same time. But typology's schematization cannot gather up all that is the City; the system of types may claim to be the epistemological infrastructure but not the ontological ground of architecture. What is anterior to all typology, then, is simply the dialectical fact that architecture constitutes itself in relation to what is not architecture. For its autonomy, in other words, architecture requires something heteronomous. According to Rossi, that something is the social itself. Of course, all of architecture emerges from a historical and social context, but Rossi's formulation is more particular. Consider *The Architecture of the City's* concluding paragraph, in which the City's order is given a biographical-biological characterization as an apparatus that regulates identifications and relations with other subjects and objects and then remains as a record: "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 feelings with which we recognize it.”²⁵ Rossi makes a similar point elsewhere: “Architecture is the most important of the arts and sciences, because its cycle is natural like the cycle of man, but it is what *remains* of man.”²⁶

The City contains social relations within its structure, but unconsciously, so to speak (the unconscious is the “discourse of the Other”), while at the same time positing an ideal regulatory set of relationships that exceeds any origin. And typological practice takes as its privileged object just the social, economic, and psychological forms that organize urban life at all of its levels and against which individual architectural proposals take place and become comprehensible. The type is thus a doubled thing. The City is a palimpsest of the marks left by the events of human history, a “biographical” diagram. The City’s facts, layers of the palimpsest, are cognitive forms revealed in artifacts, constituting what Rossi calls the “individualità del fatto urbano”—the singularity of the urban event—by which he signals not just a physical thing and its formal logic but also any city’s existential life. Thus typology is, first, a record, a trace, a presentation of those marks of events that allows them to be most fully experienced and comprehended, rendering thinkable situations otherwise given only in affective terms. And the City can be thought of as the medium or matrix in which particular types are suspended and vehiculated. Second, it is the instrument—the “apparatus,” Rossi calls it—that analyzes and operates on this medium and material of any city’s history.

Such an argument presupposes that the architectural artifact is conceived as a structure and that this structure is revealed and can be recognized in the artifact itself. As a constant, this principle, which we can call the typical element, or simply the type, is to be found in all architec-

*tural artifacts. It is also then a cultural element and as such can be investigated in different architectural artifacts; typology becomes in this way the analytical moment of architecture, and it becomes readily identifiable at the level of urban artifacts.*²⁷

If we now take the epistemological and ontological claims together, we can further understand typology as nothing less than a study of superstructures, understood as involving mental processes as well as cultural products. And if we ask again about the operations by which such ideational and cultural materials might be linked up with sociomaterial reality, then an architectural type reveals itself as an intermediary object between thought and reality, "a structure that is revealed and made knowledgeable through the fact itself."²⁸ As immanent analysis of City, the logic of types is dedicated to a full engagement with reality's tones, textures, and rhythms, as much as its formal elements and syntaxes. As representational apparatus, an architectural type transmits the contours and movements of an otherwise remote and inexpressible historical reality and presents them for analysis. Formal rigor is maintained and extended into the social and back again, or better, architectural form exists as cognitive object and process in a social constellation. But it is important to insist here that, different from substantive theories of meaning or structure, Rossi's type requires a certain kind of circular and negative thinking: a type does not symbolize; nor does it convey a positive "meaning." Rather, a type *appears as symbolized*, which is to say that it appears as an analogy and a presentation of a determining Symbolic order that is itself unrepresentable and forever out of reach.

"Only a form closed and concluded [*chiusa e conchiusa*], *l'opera definita*, is the concrete measure of the dimension that surrounds it,"²⁹ Rossi claims. He is most likely responding in the passage to

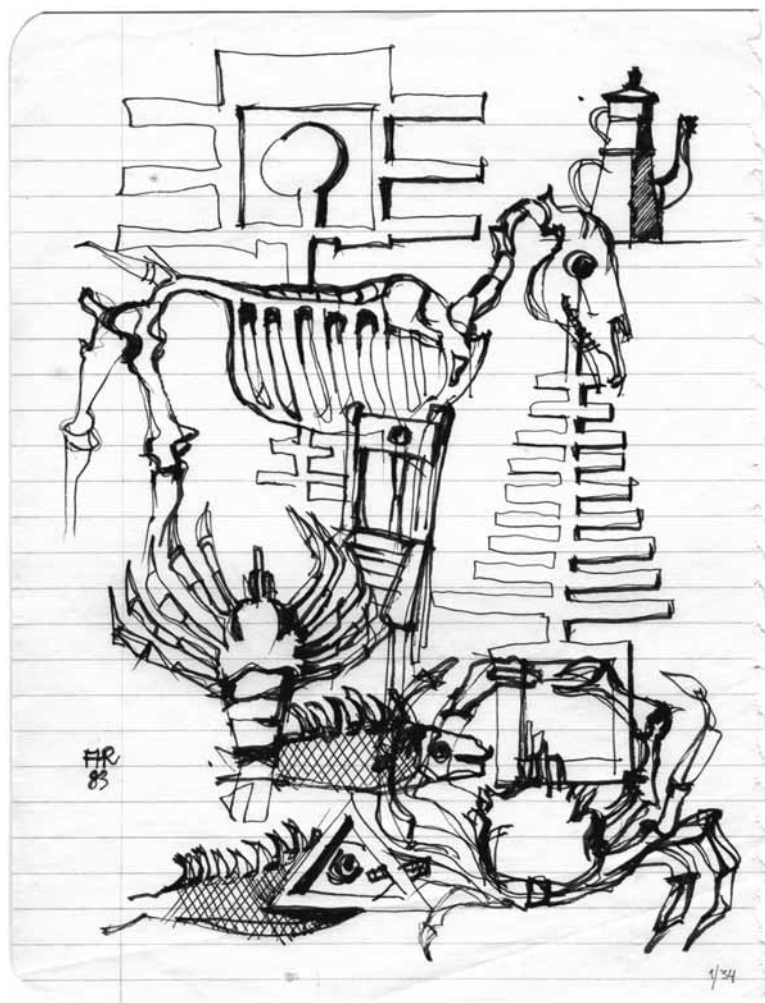
Umberto Eco's *Opera aperta* (1962) and its metaphorical use in urban design, but he might as well have been thinking of Adorno, who elaborates a similar point in his famous 1957 essay "On Lyric Poetry and Society," in which he admonishes that interpretation "may not focus directly on the so-called social perspective or the social interests of the works or their authors. Instead, it must discover how the entirety of a society, conceived as an internally contradictory unity, is manifested in the work of art. . . . Nothing that is not in works of art or aesthetic theory themselves, not part of their own form, can legitimate a determination [*Entscheidung*] of what their substance, that which has entered into their poetry, represents in social terms."³⁰ For Rossi, it seems that what was an external line of impingement between superstructural and ideational phenomena such as architecture and the material substance of the base becomes in the City an internal distinction, perhaps like Adorno's microanalysis; for the City carries within itself both superstructure and infrastructure, both culture and history, both process and raw material. In his foundational study of Rossi, Moneo put this succinctly in terms of the autonomy of architecture in the city: "Through the idea of autonomy, necessary to the understanding of the form of the city, architecture becomes a category of reality."³¹

Our discussion of the anteriority of type as a temporal logic now turns back on and complicates the corollary phenomenon of typological persistence. For the enabling, organizing, architecturally identifying force of the City is anterior to and determinate of all architecture—the necessary condition and prelude to all practice—and the objects and events produced out of the City's conditions of possibility trace the latent or repressed reality of this Symbolic order, reoriginating its forms in new situations wrested free from the City's necessity. But the objects and events, the types, thus produced then return their forms (cognitive structures that mimic the social) to the City's matrix and persist in

surroundings utterly alien to them—analogues of a single, unfinished architectural narrative, a great collective story whose end, for Rossi, is as impossible to achieve as its process is necessary to perform: hence his relentless repetition and substitution of types. “Now it seems to me that everything has already been seen; when I design I repeat, and in the observation of things there is also the observation of memory. I design my projects with a discrete sense of affection for each one but I reduce them to things that surround me; country houses, smoke stacks, monuments and objects, as if everything arose from and was founded in time; in this beginnings and endings are confounded.”³²

Critics of Rossi have often detected in his ceaseless repetitions of images a nostalgia for a lost ideal order or perhaps even a mourning for that loss.³³ What is more, the defining characteristics of his projects—extreme ambiguities of scale; juxtapositions of incommensurable objects seemingly forced by the architect into some silent, secret dialogue; the sense of separateness and fixity radiated by the elemental objects in metaphysical cityscapes, lit by a light that seems to consume all substance—all these should be read as results of the radical unavailability of the City’s Symbolic order to the individual types that desire to possess it. The types persist, torn from themselves, because of this lack; desire itself persists because of this lack.

The phenomenon of persistence must therefore be read as an ambiguous or paradoxical logic—not just of enduring after a beginning (a physical form being newly occupied and experienced beyond its original usefulness and contextual integrity) but also of persisting after an end, the survival of form beyond what should have been its point of exhaustion. Think of the library rotunda of the elementary school at Fagnano Olona and especially of the black-and-white photographs that are always its privileged presentation. To become a library, the rotunda must negate its origins as baptistery or theater. But Rossi rejects these



2.3

Aldo Rossi, untitled, 1983, sketch.

Courtesy Fondazione Aldo Rossi.

The plans in the sketch are of the school at Fagnano Olona and the cemetery at Modena.

handed-down meanings with a formal reduction and negation so radical that it appears not simply to transform the rotunda type from one use to another but to elevate meaninglessness itself in place of meaning, and absence and lack in place of presence. Moneo comments on the resultant formal-temporal confusion of the school: "Do not the schoolchildren of Fagnano Olona look like the inhabitants of a world not their own? The children inhabit a time that already alludes more to what will become their own past than to the present arrested by the photograph."³⁴

In Rossi's highly reflexive relation to the crisis of meaning announced by Baird, Jencks, and others, meaning inheres in the negation of meaning and the negation of meaning takes shape as a fragmentation and evacuation of form, leaving persistent images that Rossi's critics have found haunted, silent, nonidentical, and disturbing. Many have tried to assuage this atmospheric untimeliness with references to the oneiric realism of De Chirico and the *neue Sachlichkeit*. Others have pointed out that, rather than merely picking out formal similarities that existed antecedently, Rossi's constructions in fact create anew and sometimes even confuse the very typological analogies on which they claim to depend. Alan Colquhoun once remarked that Fagnano Olona was not based on anything in architecture's formal history but had rather constituted "a pure type that has not yet entered the history of which it is a model."³⁵ And Anthony Vidler invites us, somewhat ominously, to consider another example, Rossi's Trieste City Hall project, in light of associated implications characteristic of its type, which is that of a late-eighteenth-century prison: "The dialectic is clear as a fable: the society that understands the reference to prison will still have need of the reminder, while at the very point the image finally loses all meaning, the society will either have become entirely prison, or, perhaps, its opposite."³⁶ In every case, even in these brief comments, there hovers over the work a dreadful sense of an architecture out of time—remain-

ing, lingering, living on after its legitimacy and rightfulness have passed. Wilhelm Worringer long ago associated abstraction with “an immense spiritual dread of space.”³⁷ Rossi’s work is figural on the other side of abstraction and induces a dread that seems to extend not only to space but also to time.

No one has grasped the radical anachronicity of Rossi’s work better than Peter Eisenman. In an essay entitled “The House of the Dead as the City of Survival,” Eisenman weaves a historicist-psychoanalytic interpretation of a suite of drawings by Rossi that Eisenman refers to as *Città Analoga*. He first gives a concise summation of the analogue’s relation to history—“In one sense, the analogue uses history, that is, what is existing, to order what will be new. At the same time it is ahistorical in that it cuts off the formative stages of the process. In its denial of historical generation it replicates the present condition of history (without its history)” —and then anchors the historicity of the ahistorical, if you will, precisely in the historical moment of the 1970s.

*Rossi’s “rationalism” conjoins the post-1945 condition of man. And to characterize his images as “neo-classical” or “rationalist” in the traditional sense is to ignore this conjunction. For their special rationality, which consists in the combination of logic—the conscious—with the analogic—the shadow—is not necessarily to be found in their conscious imagery. Rossi’s conscious images exist only as a key to their shadow imagery. It is their intrinsic, often unconscious content which confronts the more problematic and perhaps fundamental reality of the extrinsic cultural condition today.*³⁸

In articulating the constitutive absence (the shadow, the unconscious) of the City, Eisenman is characteristically mining the Hegelian insight that each artwork is symbol and sole inhabitant

of a world that is nonetheless implied by the very achieved singularity of the artwork's existence. Hence the alienation of work like Rossi's. For the artwork is the dislocated, displaced, and singular example of a world that cannot otherwise bring itself into existence more completely and must remain largely absent and incomplete. Rossi maintains the world-constructing desire of the modern avant-garde, but he is condemned by *this* world—by posthistory—to repeat the same analogically rather than to follow modernism's frequently twinned impulse of utopian future countergesture. The new cannot appear as such in Rossi's work; it can appear only as an unrepresentable negative totality, the comprehension of which must take the form of Adorno's micrological analysis of architectural fragments and ruins.³⁹

Eisenman indeed comes very close also to Adorno's post-Holocaust art thesis—that after Auschwitz there can be no before Auschwitz. Our encounter with art is on the ground of a trauma and an impasse so extreme that it leaves no space for meaningful resolution. The conviction of Eisenman's writing, which defies paraphrase, warrants quoting at length:

*The events of 1945, the full comprehension of the meaning of the Holocaust and atomic destruction, have changed the bases on which life can be lived. For man faced with a choice between imminent or eventual mass death, heroism, whether individual or collective, is untenable: only survival remains possible. The problem is now of choosing between an anachronistic continuance of hope and an acceptance of the bare conditions of survival. And when the hero can be only a survivor, there is no choice. The condition of man which formerly contained this alternative has ended, and the continuous "narrative" of the progress of Western civilization has been broken.*⁴⁰

According to Eisenman, the end is already behind us and architecture is always already surviving its own death, a testimony to its own anachronicity. As a survivor, architecture is condemned to afterlife and aftermath, implying both the post-finitum as well as the fatal repetition compulsion (which we consider shortly). Perhaps Eisenman's concluding paragraph is not too hyperbolic. Rossi's "is an architecture which confronts the reality of the present. His drawings offer 'nothing new' precisely because anything new which can be offered is, in the present condition, nothing. They simply ask, however anxiously, for the existence of a choice between life as survival, and death."⁴¹ Had Eisenman known Adorno's famous formulation of the logic of living on after the end, he surely would have appropriated it for architecture: "Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed."⁴²

Eisenman's reading of Rossi's analogous architecture brings us to the brink where the architectural Imaginary is disrupted by an intrusion of the Real. For when architecture's symbolic efficiency is in doubt, when the stability of its Other is undermined, the Imaginary itself starts to collapse. And yet at this brink we are also able to ask the question, What then is architecture's Real? and to answer with one powerful word: History. For the City, architecture's symbolic mandate, its necessity, is not some content but rather the inexorable form of human events, the outcome of a vast human process. The City is the architectural form taken by historical necessity. And while form grants architecture a certain freedom, History enforces its reinscription in the fated repetition of the same. Whence come the numerous negations that every critic of Rossi has stumbled on: ruins, abandonments, destructions, dissolutions, an entire canon of negativity, the importance of which will be, above all, not a declaration of architecture's end but of the kernel of History installed at its core. So it is not the case that the anteriority of type is a beginning that has the endur-

ance of types as its end but rather that both have been shifted from states to processes that operate together as modes of delay. Architecture has no end because it is a permanent movement through time—a persistent differential. Architecture uses its difference and its autonomy to manage the heteronomous historical and social forces that inhere in architecture as a social product but in a way that allows the repressed social forms of the material to be known and experienced. If such a process leads to necessary failure, then that is in no way the result of technical inadequacy. Rather, it comes from the structural impossibility of succeeding in the task thus faced—a truth to the historical demands of the material—a task that must nevertheless be undertaken.

Laënnec, *Sexualité humaine: Histoire, ethnologie, sociologie, psychanalyse, philosophie* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1966).

19. Is it a mere coincidence that Joseph Rykwert's *Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* was published in 1972? Or was the writing of that book driven by the same desire that drove the late avant-garde?
20. Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, p. 31.
21. The title of Rossi's drawing is a reference to a line in Georg Trakl's poem "Abendlied."
22. John Hejduk, *Mask of Medusa: Works, 1947–1983*, ed. Kim Shkapich (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 63.
23. Fredric Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan" (1977), in *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971–1986*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 104.
24. Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology," p. 32.
25. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 102. Žižek echoes Jameson: "The Lacanian Real is not some eternal essence, but strictly an historical Real. Not a Real that is simply opposed to quick historical change, but the Real that generates historical change while at the same time being reproduced by these changes." Slavoj Žižek, "Interview," *Historical Materialism* 7 (2000): 194.
26. Steven Helmling uses the concepts of deliberate and inevitable failures in *The Success and Failure of Fredric Jameson* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001). On the practico-inert and its counterfinality, see Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (London: Verso, 2004).
27. While I hope that each of these five chapters can be read independently, this writing has a logic that is cumulative and totalizing, which is to say that it attempts to unfold the fundamental positions in the ideological field of the late avant-garde, from which all corollary and subsequent positions derive. What is more, this introductory chapter is probably better understood if read *last* rather than first. As befitting a grappling with the negative of the sort presented here, however, I could not have told you that until now.

ANALOGY

1. Charles Jencks and George Baird, eds., *Meaning in Architecture* (New York: George Braziller, 1969).

2. As defined by Ferdinand de Saussure, *langue* (connoting "language" but also a particular "tongue") is the specific but abstract linguistic system that preexists any individual use of it and exists perfectly only within a collectivity; *parole*, the individual speech act, is the manipulation of that system to produce concrete utterances and includes localized contingencies and "accidents" like accent or personal style. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in collaboration with Albert Reidlinger, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959). Also see Roland Barthes *Elements of Semiology* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), which was the text that introduced many architecture theorists to semiotics.
3. The renewed discussion of typology was prompted by Giulio Carlo Argan, "Sul concetto di tipologia architettonica," in *Festschrift für Hans Sedlmayr*, ed. Karl Oettinger and Mohammed Rassem (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1962), translated as "On the Typology of Architecture," trans. Joseph Rykwert, *Architectural Design* 33, no. 12 (December 1963): 564–565. In the article, Argan summarizes and interprets Quatremère de Quincy's nineteenth-century theory.
4. According to Lévi-Strauss, mythemes "operate simultaneously on two levels: that of language, where they keep on having their own meaning, and that of metalanguage, where they participate as elements of a supersignification that can come only from their union." Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 143.
5. Theodor W. Adorno, "Functionalism Today" (1965), trans. Jane Nauman and John Smith, *Oppositions* 17 (Summer 1979): 37.
6. Jacques Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious," in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 312 ff. The reflexive structure of the query conveys the enigma of the desire of the Other, the interpellated subject's unanswerable question as to what the Other desires. "That is why the question of the Other, which comes back to the subject from the place from which he expects an oracular reply in some form such as 'Che vuoi?', 'What do you want?', is the one that best leads him to the path of his own desire—providing he sets out . . . to reformulate it, even without knowing it, as 'What does he want of me?'" Lacan argues that the form of the subject's question to the big Other creates a distance between the questioner and the Symbolic order and designates a crucial lack in the Symbolic. But it also

designates the moment of subjectivity. (The Italian phrase is spoken by the Devil in Jacques Cazotte, *Le diable amoureux* [1772].) Slavoj Žižek derives a theory of ideology in part from the form of this query. Žižek, "Che Vuoi?", in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), pp. 87 ff.

7. Rafael Moneo, "On Typology," *Oppositions* 13 (Summer 1978): 44.
8. Aldo Rossi, *Architecture of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), p. 23.
9. I think it is correct to credit Rossi with the fundamental theorization of the city as the object of architecture's desire, even though Rossi would never have used that formulation. But the potential for such a notion was in the architectural discourse at least since Guy Debord's psychogeography (1955) or Roland Barthes's mythology of the Eiffel Tower (1964). Bernard Tschumi probably saw the psychic potential of the City for architecture as early as any. Mario Gandelonas could have made a specifically structuralist-psychoanalytic theorization of the relationship by the early 1970s and did so later in "The City as the Object of Architecture," *Assemblage* 37 (December 1998).
10. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, p. 128.
11. Rossi, cited in Tafuri, "L'Architecture dans le Boudoir," in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trans. Pellegrino d'Acerno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. 358.
12. I should say something here about the relation of the imagination and the Imaginary, terms that I have let slide into one another in this chapter. Lacan's optico-spatial characterization of the Imaginary is comparable to Kant's imagination at least insofar as both produce schemata that organize experience and knowledge. It is important to emphasize, however, that in contrast to Kant's "productive imagination," Lacan's Imaginary is radically unproductive, misleading the fragmented subject into thinking it is a whole. It seems right to me, in the case of Rossi's logic of types, to retain some ambiguity about the productive or unproductive imagination.
13. Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, trans. Lawrence Venuti (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), p. 35.
14. "When I prepared this little talk for you, it was early in the morning. I could see Baltimore through the window and it was a very interesting moment because it was not quite daylight and a neon sign indicated to me every minute the change of time, and naturally there was heavy traffic and I remarked to myself that

exactly all that I could see, except for some trees in the distance, was the result of thoughts actively thinking thoughts, where the function played by the subjects was not completely obvious. In any case the so-called *Dasein* as a definition of the subject, was there in this rather intermittent or fading spectator. The best image to sum up the unconscious is Baltimore in the early morning." Jacques Lacan, "Of Structure as an Inmixing of an Otherness Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever," in *The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 189.

15. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, pp. 57–61 passim.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
17. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 263.
18. "Initially, no distinction was made between the typology of the house and that of the tomb. The typology of the tomb and of the sepulchral structure overlaps the typology of the house; rectilinear corridors, a central space, earth and stone materials. . . . 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. Here, the monument is analogous to the relationship between life and buildings in the modern city. The cube is an abandoned or unfinished house; the cone is the chimney of a deserted factory. The analogy with death is possible only when dealing with the finished object, with the end of all things." Aldo Rossi, "The Blue of the Sky," *Oppositions* 5 (Summer 1976): 31, 34. Rossi's title is a reference to Georges Bataille's 1935 novella *Le bleu du ciel*.
19. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, p. 174.
20. For illustrations, see *Aldo Rossi Drawings and Paintings*, ed. Morris Adjmi and Giovanni Bertolotto (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993).
21. Adolf Loos, "Architektur" (1910), in *Trotzdem: 1900–1930* (Innsbruck: Brenner, 1931), pp. 109–110.
22. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, p. 107.
23. Cited in Aldo Rossi, "An Analogical Architecture," trans. David Stewart, *Architecture and Urbanism* 56 (May 1976): 74–76.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

25. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, p. 163.
26. Aldo Rossi, "Introduzione a Boullée," in *Scritti scelti sull'architettura e la città 1956–1972* (Milan: Città Studi, 1991), p. 360.
27. Rossi, *Architecture of the City*, pp. 40–41.
28. Rafael Moneo, "Aldo Rossi: The Idea of Architecture and the Modena Cemetery," *Oppositions* 5 (Summer 1976): 6, reprinted in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), p. 6.
29. Aldo Rossi, file 186, box 20, Rossi Papers, Getty Research Institute, cited in Mary Louise Lobsinger, "Antinomies of Realism in Postwar Italian Architecture" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2003), p. 287.
30. Theodor W. Adorno, "On Lyric Poetry and Society," in *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 38–39.
31. Moneo, "Aldo Rossi," p. 4.
32. Aldo Rossi, "Introduction," in *Aldo Rossi in America: 1976 to 1979*, ed. Kenneth Frampton (New York: Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies, 1979), p. 3.
33. Francesco Dal Co's observations are among the most acute: "'Analogous city' is the very place where monuments express mourning for the lost order to which they allude." Francesco Dal Co, "Criticism and Design," *Oppositions* 13 (Summer 1978): 10.
34. Rafael Moneo, "Postscript," in *Aldo Rossi Buildings and Projects*, ed. Peter Arnell and Ted Bickford (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), p. 314. It is helpful here to think of Roland Barthes's characterization of the *studium* of black and white photography, through which one gains access to the Symbolic, and the uninterpretable *punctum*, with its touching, tearing, bruising effect. When the *punctum* occurs, the photography will "annihilate itself as medium to be no longer a sign but the thing itself." Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 45.
35. Alan Colquhoun, "The Deceptions of Rationalism," paper presented at "The 1970s: The Formation of Contemporary Architectural Discourse," Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, 2001.
36. Anthony Vidler, "The Third Typology," *Oppositions* 7 (Winter 1976): 3.
37. Abstraction, for Worringer, was the most ancient form of art, which had emerged out of the desire "to divest the things of the external world of their caprice and

obscurity," to endow them with the regularity and certainty of geometry. "The urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world. . . . We might describe this state as an immense spiritual dread of space." Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. Michael Bullock (New York: International Universities Press, 1953), p. 15.

38. Peter Eisenman, "The House of the Dead as the City of Survival," in *Aldo Rossi in America*, p. 9.
39. Microanalysis embraces rather than resolves the contradictions between the conceptual demand for the new and the impossibility of its actual achievement, allowing each to pass into its other. "It is up to dialectical cognition to pursue the inadequacy of thought and thing, to experience it in the thing." Microanalysis is the form this experience takes. See Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973 [German ed., 1966]), p. 153.
40. Eisenman, "The House of the Dead," p. 5.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
42. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 3.

REPETITION

1. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 5.
2. In 1971 Rossi suffered a near-fatal automobile accident, after which he became increasingly interested in the idea of architecture as a fractured body or a series of skeletal fragments to be reassembled. See Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984).
3. Peter Eisenman, "The Houses of Memory: The Texts of Analogy," in Aldo Rossi, *Architecture of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), p. 5.
4. Peter Eisenman, "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End," *Perspecta* 21 (1984): 166, reprinted in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).
5. *Cities of Artificial Excavation: The Work of Peter Eisenman, 1978–1988* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994).
6. Eisenman, "The End of the Classical," p. 172.