Ludwig Hilberseimer and Metropolisarchitecture: The Analogue, the Blasé Attitude, the Multitude

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Abstract: This article close-reads Modernist architect Ludwig Hilberseimer's early architectural projects, which employed a language of uniform fenestration, repetition and geometrically reduced typical forms, as embodying Georg Simmel's blasé attitude in analogical form, and places this reading in relation to Aldo Rossi's concept of the analogical city and the political theorist Paolo Virno's notion of the multitude. The first part outlines the discourse around Simmel, Hilberseimer and Rossi to note salient connections between these figures, their thought and the process of modernization. The second part discusses Simmel's and Hilberseimer's readings of the metropolis and interprets Hilberseimer's formal language as embodying the blasé attitude. The third part places Hilberseimer in dialogue with Rossi and interprets Rossi's analogical city as inhabited by another of Simmel's figures, the stranger. The article concludes by tracing a line from Simmel's figures of the blasé and the stranger via Hilberseimer's metropolis architecture and Rossi's analogical city toward the contemporary multitude, a collective linguistic subject. In doing so Hilberseimer's and Rossi's grammar of the metropolis can be rethought in relation to contemporary subject positions as a critical project toward an architectural theory of the multitude pushing back against the increasingly individualised city and market urbanism prevalent today.

Keywords: Ludwig Hilberseimer; Georg Simmel; Aldo Rossi; metropolis; architecture; critique; multitude; abstraction; analogical city

1. Introduction

In his canonical essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (Simmel [1903] 1971) the sociologist and philosopher of the city Georg Simmel extracted the principle characteristics of early twentieth-century metropolitan life: mechanisation, division of labour, multiplicity, pronounced differences, nervous energy, intensification of consciousness, intellectual character, abstraction, the levelling and exchangeability associated with the money economy. For Simmel, these qualities lead to the psychological reaction of the "blasé attitude." Art avant-gardes such as dada, cubism and futurism pursued an aesthetic language that expressed the intensity of the metropolis, multiplicity of experience and nervous energy by means of collage, montage and assemblage whereby, "the picture becomes a neutral field on which to project the experience of the shock suffered in the city," as Manfredo Tafuri (Tafuri [1973] 1976, p. 86) commented in *Architecture and Utopia*. Architects and planners such as Ebenezer Howard, Bruno Taut and Frank Lloyd Wright rejected the new metropolitan condition and pursued an anti-urban ideology in their respective projects for Garden cities, Alpine architecture and *The Disappearing City* (analysed and critiqued by for example (Choay 1969; Pope [1996] 2014)). On the contrary Ludwig Hilberseimer called for a critical engagement with the city and developed a metropolitan architecture that negated the so-called shock of the metropolis by absorbing its intensity and distilling the "nervous energy" into a formal language of uniform fenestration, repetition and

geometrically reduced typical forms (also refer (Mertins and Jennings 2010), which contextualises Hilberseimer's relationship to the avant-garde art groups of the 1920s).

The aim of this article is to close-read Hilberseimer's early architectural projects, which employed typical forms and uniform "expressionless" architecture, as the architectural analogue of Simmel's figure of the blasé attitude, placing this in relation to Aldo Rossi's notion of the analogical city and the political theorist Paolo Virno's reading of the contemporary "multitude." For Virno the multitude is a collective linguistic subject who inhabits the "linguistic formation" of the metropolis (Virno 2008), and whom, like Simmel's blasé individual, is characterised by abstraction and intellectual character, which Virno, following Marx, calls the General Intellect (Virno 2004). The multitude is an echo of Rossi's notion of collective memory and resonates with the collective subjectivity of Simmel's blasé individual. There is an implicit lineage which I will read in what follows. I argue the blasé attitude, described by Simmel as a way the metropolitan subject internalises the "shock" of the metropolis, is given what I call here "analogical form" in the architecture (the metropolis architecture) of Hilberseimer. The analogue is understood by drawing on Aldo Rossi's notion of the analogical city where the city is the analogue of the collective memory of its people and where thought becomes form (Rossi [1996] 1982; Rossi 1976). Rossi's idea of collective memory corresponds in some respect with what Hilberseimer has said in *The New City* where he writes how "social, spiritual, political and economic forces" change the "structure" of the city (Hilberseimer 1944, p. 54) and in *The Nature of Cities*: "Cities are an expression of particular spiritual and material, social and political conditions, influenced and modified by the forms of production and the means of communication" (Hilberseimer 1955, p. 13). Or following Virno, analogical city is a "real abstraction."

This article therefore operates specifically in relation to Hilberseimer and Simmel, yet in broader terms it links Hilberseimer's metropolis architecture with Aldo Rossi's analogical architecture, and Simmel's blasé figure with the figure of the multitude in Virno's thought. The questions posed in the article, related to the city, history, the discipline, the relation between thought and modernization processes, design and critique, individual agency and the collective subject, and architecture as critical activity, seek to remain open. The methodological approach is theoretical and operative rather than strictly historical. I approach from the point of view that architecture, as not only buildings and the city structures, but as drawing, image, text, thought, spatial and signifying practice, is a language, is subject to reading, close-reading and re-reading toward the opening up of discourse and an engagement with intellectual culture more widely.

In the first part of this article, entitled "The Shock of the Metropolis," I will briefly survey some of the ways in which the figures discussed here (Simmel, Hilberseimer, Rossi, Virno) and the salient ideas (metropolis, the blasé attitude, language, the analogue, multitude) are already discursively linked and the historical context within which the ideas took form. In the second part, entitled "Metropolis Architecture: Hilberseimer. Typical Form, Repetition, the Blasé Attitude," I discuss the formal language of Hilberseimer's architecture through a reading of a selection of his projects to elucidate notions of repetition, seriality, uniformity, the logic of which is typicality. I interpret the corresponding readings of the metropolis put forward by Simmel and Hilberseimer in relation to Hilberseimer's art theoretical writings, which put forward a "law of form" where the notion of the particular is rejected and the typical is emphasised. Although Hilberseimer never mentions Simmel directly, there is a connection in the way their thought on the metropolis coincides and I argue that Hilberseimer's projects embody Simmel's blasé figure. In the third part, entitled "Analogical City: Rossi. The Analogue, Collective Memory, the Stranger," I argue that Rossi's projects develop a conceptual and formal dialogue with Hilberseimer's projects and that Hilberseimer's Simmelian interpretation of the metropolis corresponds to Rossi's idea of collective memory and the analogical city. I interpret Rossi's collage project Analogical City: Panel as inhabited with Simmel's "stranger," a figure associated with the blasé attitude. In my conclusion "Metropolis and Multitude" I briefly trace a line from Simmel's figures of the blasé and the stranger to Hilberseimer's metropolis architecture and Rossi's analogical city, toward the figure of the contemporary multitude (specifically (Virno 2004, 2008); and more broadly (Hardt and Negri 2009;

Marazzi 2011; Lazzarato 2014)). In doing so Hilberseimer's and Rossi's architectural grammar of the metropolis can be rethought in relation to contemporary subject positions as a critical project toward an architectural theory of the multitude and model to push back against the increasingly individualised city and market urbanism prevalent today (such as what is put forward by for instance (Schumacher 2015)).

2. The Shock of the Metropolis

The expansion of cities toward the end of the nineteenth-century and into the twentieth, their transformation, rapid urbanisation and new forms of subjective experience led to what became known as the metropolis. In her analysis of the modern city, Françoise Choay has described the double experience of the metropolis at this time which, "revolutionise[d] not only the spatial organisation, but also the mentality of the city dweller" (Choay 1969, p. 8). On one hand the city densified, forcing expansion beyond a traditional boundary. At the same time the city was divided into a "production–consumption dichotomy" as Choay notes forcing new forms of circulation, mechanisation, communication and infrastructural development and reorganisation. Writing in his significantly titled text *Die Groszstadt*, Otto Wagner (Wagner [1911] 2014) recognised the fundamental difference in scale and experience of the modern metropolis against the traditional notion of "city." Wagner wrote about the economic conditions of the city and how the logic of mobility, movement and infrastructure shaped the form of the city, key themes that are picked up in Hilberseimer's theory of the metropolis. On the other hand, for Choay the new urban order derived from industrial-capitalist production and was not easily assimilated by the city dweller because of the economic drive, demographic concentration and as she says, "increasingly abstract means of communication" toward the "acceleration of history" (Choay 1969, p. 9), leading to what Tafuri called the "shock provoked by the metropolis" in *Architecture and Utopia* (Tafuri [1973] 1976, p. 89). It is precisely for these reasons that the metropolis is the founding site of modernism and avant-garde experiment that engendered, as Anthony Vidler writes in *Warped Space*, "a culture of interpretation dedicated to the study and explanation of these new urban phenomena and their social effects . . . " (Vidler 2000, p. 25). As is well documented, thinkers such as Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel and later Theodor Adorno responded to the development of the metropolis, the social effects of modernity and mental life through different forms of critique. A recent example of how the Frankfurt School of thought can be reread is Sven-Olov Wallenstein's (2016) *Architecture, Critique, Ideology* which draws in particular on Adorno to develop a critical theory of modern architecture (Tafuri [1980] 1990; Cacciari 1993; Hays 1995).

In the following I focus on how Simmel's thought is implicated specifically in the city thinking of Manfredo Tafuri and Massimo Cacciari, who were part of the wider "Venice School" group of historians and theorists of the 1960s and 70s who included Francesco dal Co, Alberto Asor Rosa and Antonio Negri. The story of the Venice School is conflicted. For alternative readings of the period and the intellectual discourse, Patrizia Lombardo has considered the intellectual and historical context around Cacciari's thought in her "Introduction: The Philosophy of the City" for Cacciari's (1993) *Architecture and Nihilism*, while in *The Project of Autonomy* Pier Vittorio Aureli (Aureli [2008] 2013) has discussed what he calls the "Venice Group" focused around architect Aldo Rossi.

In Cacciari's *Architecture and Nihilism*, a history of negative critique as it relates to the development of the Metropolis, Simmel's 1903 text "Metropolis and Mental Life" is a point of departure with Cacciari setting up a dialogue with Benjamin's interpretation of Baudelaire. For Cacciari, negative thought is a critical approach that stresses the irreducible nature of contradiction and crisis within capitalist development. Negative thought registers the discontinuities of history, "the leaps, the ruptures" as Cacciari writes but not the historical flow (Cacciari 1993, p. 13). Following Simmel, Cacciari reads the metropolis as abstracting notions of the personal and the emotional toward a calculating rational subjectivity (Cacciari 1993, p. 4). In a fundamental passage in *The Philosophy of Money* Simmel called this "the calculating character of modern times" and writes about the "rationalistic character [of contemporary life] betrays the influence of money," (Simmel [1900] 1997, p. 443) whereby the "cognitive ideal is to conceive of the world as a huge arithmetical problem, to conceive events and

the qualitative distinction of things as a system of numbers" (Simmel [1900] 1997, p. 444). It is not hard to recognise the continued relevance of Simmel's observations on the "calculating character" and objectification of urban life read today in terms of market-based urbanism and the metric-based quantification of living experience.

Cacciari's close-reading of Simmel's "Metropolis and Mental Life" was the primary reference point for Manfredo Tafuri's interpretation of Simmel's idea of the metropolitan condition. Having quoted fragments of Simmel's essay: "the metropolis, identified as the seat of the 'money economy.' The 'intensification of nervous stimulation' induced by the 'rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions'" Tafuri notes how the conditions described by Simmel generate the blasé attitude of the individual, which Tafuri calls the "man without quality" who is "indifferent to value" (Tafuri [1973] 1976, p. 86). For Tafuri, Simmel's consideration of the metropolis summarise the concerns of the modernist avant-garde: "The problem was, in fact, how to render active the intensification of nervous stimulation," and Tafuri offers a critical strategy: "to absorb the shock provoked by the metropolis by transforming it into a new principle of dynamic development . . . " (Tafuri [1973] 1976, pp. 88–89). In the following section I will come back to this point to elaborate the connection between Simmel's thought and Hilberseimer's metropolis architecture, a link which seems to have been left hanging by Tafuri. For instance Tafuri only later in *Architecture and Utopia* quips, "It is true that Hilberseimer's 'city-machine,' the image of Simmel's metropolis . . . " (Tafuri [1973] 1976, pp. 106–7) and in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* Tafuri briefly states that Hilberseimer's observations on the metropolis are seen to "echo the relationship indicated by Simmel between the 'metropolitan intensification of nervous life' and the superior level of 'consciousness'" (Tafuri [1980] 1990, p. 220).

My argument is that the metropolis architecture of Hilberseimer is the analogue of Simmel's blasé attitude. As I will discuss later, the blasé individual is the conflicted metropolitan subject who, by analogy to the conflicted and contradictory metropolis, fully embodies the structure of contradictions: the confrontation of objects and people, the excessive distance through anonymity from each individual, the simultaneous overstimulation and disenchantment, the intellect shot through by emotional spirit, extreme individuality within the framework of mass social relations and the internalisation of those social relations within the individual. These contradictions are given form (what I call analogical form) by their negation (Cacciari) or absorption (Tafuri) in the formal language of Hilberseimer's metropolis architecture.

The notion of analogical form is drawn from Aldo Rossi's thought, who, in *The Architecture of the City* wrote that the city is the locus of collective memory. For Rossi, the city was the analogical form of the collective subjectivity of its inhabitants. Rossi's idea of the analogue was also conflicted: on one hand the analogue as a formal principle united analysis and design, composition and typological principles, and where architecture's history, its typical forms and enduring urban types is also the material of architecture (Rossi [1996] 1982); and on the other hand the analogue as a figure of thought that synthesised oppositions such as the individual and collective, object and subject, history and memory, architecture and city, the real and imaginary. While Rossi does not refer to Simmel directly, the lucidity of Simmel's thought, its fragmentary character and influence on Walter Benjamin, who was a key reference for Rossi, would certainly have been known. Later I interpret Simmel's figure of the "stranger" (Simmel [1908] 1971), a development of the blasé individual, in Rossi's Analogical City project. It is worth noting that in *A Scientific Autobiography* Rossi (1981) reflected that he was fond of German culture and referred to thinkers including Karl Kraus, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertolt Brecht. Rossi's Tendenza group (including Massimo Scolari, Giorgio Grassi, Arduino Cantàfora and many others) too were influenced by the German rationalism of architects such as Ernst May, Peter Behrens, Hans Schmidt and Ludwig Hilberseimer. In the 1973 Rational Architecture exhibition Cantàfora, under Rossi's direction, montaged projects by some of those architects into a single perspective drawing. Hilberseimer's 1924 High-Rise City organises the central portion of the drawing and presents itself as a uniform backdrop to the singular buildings placed in the foreground.

The figures (Simmel, Hilberseimer, Tafuri, Rossi) and themes (metropolis, analogue, language, critique) discussed in this section condense in a statement by Tafuri in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*. In the chapter "'L'architecture dans le boudoir'" Tafuri writes: "The thread of Ariadne with which Rossi weaves his typological research does not lead to the 'reestablishment of the discipline,' but rather to its dissolution, thereby confirming *in extremis* the tragic recognition of Georg Simmel" (Tafuri [1980] 1990, p. 274). Tafuri is discussing the linguistic character of Rossi's work as the example of a "critical act" upon the discipline that puts the object into crisis, a crisis that corresponds to Simmel's interpretation of the crisis of the metropolis with its amplified differences and discontinuities and where city had been displaced by metropolis, and the individual displaced into the mass subject. According to Tafuri the "crisis of the object" was already anticipated in Hilberseimer's metropolis architecture, where the architectural object had "disappeared" (Tafuri [1973] 1976, p. 107) but for Tafuri it was Rossi who "validated" the proposition (Tafuri [1980] 1990, p. 277). Through the elaboration of an "alphabet of forms" freed from contact with the "real," Rossi "dissolved" and "destroyed" the architectural object toward its critical rearticulation with the city.

In the following sections I focus on the alternative critical strategies developed by Hilberseimer and Rossi to internalise the "shock" of the metropolis and reconfigure metropolitan form through a process of repetition, negation and absorption in the metropolis architecture of Hilberseimer and repetition, distillation and critical exchangeability in the analogical architecture of Rossi. For Simmel and Hilberseimer the Metropolis, as it developed by the 1920s, was a paradigm for the money economy based on commerce and toward financial abstractions and a machine that produced a shifted form of consciousness. For Rossi the city was a linguistic machine that produced an "alphabet of forms" and united individual and collective memory, linguistic capacity and imagination, a reading that developed during the 1970s European transition to post-Fordist production where the material of modernisation was not necessarily fixed capital, real estate and machinery but human intellect and the faculty of language. Today these paradigms seem to coincide and I will conclude by linking the linguistic character of Hilberseimer's and Rossi's architecture of the metropolis with the "metropolis built on language" in Paolo Virno's reading of the contemporary multitude (Virno 2004, 2008).

3. Metropolis Architecture: Hilberseimer. Typical Form, Repetition, the Blasé Attitude

In 1927 Hilberseimer published *Groszstadtarchitektur*, translated as *Metropolisarchitecture* (Hilberseimer [1927] 2012). The book is both an analysis of the metropolis and a theory of architectural form. In the short first chapter, "The Metropolis," Hilberseimer distinguishes between the city and the metropolis; the latter emerging as a paradigmatic form that requires a "new architecture," a "metropolisarchitecture." "The firmly organised city emerges at the level of artisan production," Hilberseimer wrote, while "the metropolis is a product of the economic development of the modern era" and the "global economy" (Hilberseimer [1927] 2012, pp. 84–85). Metropolis displaces the traditional city. Industrial production, mechanisation, the concentration and circulation of capital and the ethos thus embodied became the fundamental structure of society and a radical break from tradition. This ethos is canonically described by Georg Simmel who wrote how the metropolis had displaced the "polis," the metropolis produced sharp differences in space and society, and with implications for the mental life of the inhabitants (a Rossian collective memory):

> The psychological foundation, upon which the metropolitan individuality is erected, is the intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli [. . .] Stimulated by the difference between present impressions and those which have preceded [. . .] The rapid telescoping of changing images, pronounced differences within what is grasped at a single glance, and the unexpectedness of violent stimuli. To the extent that the metropolis creates these psychological conditions—with every crossing of the street, with the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life—it creates in the sensory foundations of mental life [. . .] a deep contrast with [. . .] small town and rural existence (Simmel [1903] 1971, p. 325).

For Simmel and Hilberseimer the new metropolis was a product of speculative market capitalism and was socially and spatially multifarious, dense and unruly. In a passage that evokes Simmel's metropolitan condition, Hilberseimer writes the following:

> Thus the present form of the metropolis owes its appearance primarily to the economic form of capitalist imperialism, which, for its part, developed in close collaboration with science and technologies of production. Its powers extend far beyond national economies and increasingly into the global economy. An excess of intensity and energy is achieved through extreme concentration and comprehensive organisation. Since production for one's own needs is no longer sufficient, aggressive overproduction is encouraged; the focus is on stimulating needs rather than satisfying them. Thus the metropolis appears first and foremost as a creation of all-powerful capital; as a feature of its anonymity; as an urban form with its own economic, social, and collective psychic foundations that enable the simultaneous isolation and tightest amalgamation of its inhabitants. A rhythm of life amplified a thousand times displaces the local and the individual. Metropolises share a certain resemblance with one another; one finds an internationalism in their appearance. They do not relate to specific domains . . . (Hilberseimer [1927] 2012, pp. 86–87).

In *Metropolisarchitecture* Hilberseimer follows with an analysis of the typologies associated with the new metropolis and divides the book into ten chapters dealing with metropolitan typologies including: residential buildings such as housing and hotels, commercial buildings such as offices and banks, industrial buildings such as factories and warehouses, transportation buildings such as airports and stations. Each chapter compiles examples of built and theoretical projects by architects as diverse as Daniel Burnham, McKim, Mead & White to Le Corbusier. Pier Vittorio Aureli has described the organisation of Hilberseimer's book as a "realist compendium of architectural solutions for the problems confronting the metropolis" (Aureli 2011, p. 5). Having analysed the urban types that make up the capitalist metropolis, Hilberseimer puts forward a theory of architectural form, concluding the book with a chapter titled "Metropolisarchitecture." He writes: "Metropolisarchitecture is considerably dependent on solving two factors: the individual cell of the room and the collective urban organism" (Hilberseimer [1927] 2012, pp. 86–87, 270). Architectural form is thus a consequence of the individual room and the metropolitan scale. The standardised element, the room, is placed in a continuous "assembly line" that passes through the house, the urban block, the district and to the city, as Tafuri observed (Tafuri [1973] 1976, p. 101). The method and scale of assembly line mass production becomes the implicit organisational principle of metropolitan form. Metropolisarchitecture thus integrates city and architecture in such a way that recalls Aldo Rossi's concept of the urban artefact, which sought to unite architecture and the city spatially and temporally as well as typologically and morphologically. On one level the methods of industrial mass-production become part of architectural design (such as Le Corbusier's "mass-production houses" in *Toward an Architecture* (Le Corbusier [1923] 2008) or his diagram for the Dom-ino). On another level there is a notion of integrating architecture and city where the room is the organising device extruded from architecture to the city. A third level integrates distinct fields of knowledge, where the laws of art are coupled with the laws of architectural form. The following descriptions of projects can help elucidate such a law of form and a point to which I will return in a moment.

The canonical project by Hilberseimer is the *Hochhausstadt*, the High-Rise City (1924). In *Metropolisarchitecture*, the project is framed as a counter to Le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine* (Le Corbusier [1924] 1987). The *Ville Contemporaine* is made up of different formal typologies (perimeter blocks, set-back "redents," cruciform towers, z-plan factories), which Le Corbusier would disarticulate and transform from project to project, eventually condensing at his Algiers design in the 1930s. Hilberseimer, in contrast, puts forward a single hybrid-type, the block-slab, which consisted of a 5-storey courted block containing mainly commercial programme, which forms a plinth, from which a 15-storey slab rises (mostly housing). While in Le Corbusier's project the city is zoned horizontally into functional areas (commercial centre, cultural inner ring, residential edge), Hilberseimer proposes

a vertical division between commercial base and residential top—essentially a traditional strategy that Hilberseimer argues brings greater density. In Hilberseimer's well-known perspective drawings, with their alluring and oneiric appearance, colourless and contextless, inhabited with a multitude of shadowy figures, the anonymous mass-subject coincides with the anonymity of the generic metropolis. The plan is vertically extruded into volume, the room is horizontally extruded into block, the mass is articulated by uniform punctured windows, and the city extends into the horizon.

Preceding the High-Rise City were projects such as the Residential City, the *Wohnstadt* (1923) and the town square project called *Kleinstadt* (1905) (Pommer et al. 1988). In the former Hilberseimer uses the rectangular block as a typical form to organise a housing district. Protruding stairwells and recessed loggia's articulate a cubic mass. Room sizes are identical for each apartment type so that the plan is an extrusion of the required area with bedrooms on one side and the stairwell and living areas on the other side. Like the High-Rise City, the façade is articulated with a uniform distribution of windows. At *Kleinstadt* a row of pitched roof houses defines an open square. All buildings share the same language of square plan, uniformly sized openings and pitched roof, with the public building at the centre differentiated with a window where the houses have a door.

These projects share a language of repetition, geometrically reduced typical forms and uniform fenestration (see Figure 1). They develop strategies of extrusion, duplication, repetition and telescoping of scales. A series is produced that reproduces metropolitan thought and form toward a coherent metropolitan language. Each image used to depict the projects is contextless yet creates its own context as a dialogue with the other images, with Hilberseimer's other projects and to the typologies that make up the architecture of the metropolis. The perspective construction of the images produce a framework that holds the repeatable elements and frames their exchangeability between projects. The elements "float" within the frame and become subject to substitution and exchange, such as in Simmel's observation on the metropolis that all elements "float" within the money economy, levelled and thus subject to endless exchangeability. While in Hilberseimer's drawings there is an allusion to the anonymity of the mass subject, or what Michael Hays has called the posthumanist subject "without subjectivity" (Hays 1995, p. 176), it is possible to interpret Hilberseimer's drawings and projects as embodying what Simmel called the blasé attitude.

In response to the intensity of metropolitan experience, Simmel argued there is a turn inward to individual forms of existence as a self-imposed alienation in order to develop a "protective shield." In his canonical statement Simmel calls this the blasé attitude: "Through the mere quantitative intensification of the same [metropolitan] conditions this achievement is transformed into its opposite, into this peculiar adaptive phenomenon—the blasé attitude—in which the nerves reveal their final possibility of adjusting themselves to the content and the form of metropolitan life by renouncing the response to them" (Simmel [1903] 1971, p. 330). The blasé attitude internalises the shock of the city. It levels the different stimuli, abstracts and renounces metropolitan life as a way to live metropolitan life. Pronounced differences become homogeneous, flat and grey to the blasé person. For Cacciari, the blasé attitude expresses the ideology of the metropolis as a "form of negative thought" (Cacciari 1993, p. 9). It is that negation which is expressed in Hilberseimer's architecture. The blasé attitude is given analogical form in the architectural projects, drawings and montages of Hilberseimer. It is helpful to draw on what Hilberseimer described in his art theoretical writings to develop this point. In his Nietzschean-titled essay "The Will to Architecture" Hilberseimer examined the development of abstract art in relation to power and subjective volition calling abstraction a "new classicism". Hilberseimer wrote: "Abstract art was the first to transcend the narrow boundary of the subjective in order to reach the objective, the typical. It relinquished the compositional principle in favour of the constructive. With Suprematism it achieved its ultimate effects" (Hilberseimer [1923] 2012, pp. 283–84). For Hilberseimer, Suprematism swept away the anthropomorphic remnants of Expressionism and Cubism toward new creative possibilities based on fundamental geometric forms that could be deployed by a new abstract language of architectural form. Elsewhere Hilberseimer wrote that the Suprematists reached the point of "nothingness," and closed "the process of analytical reduction" (Hilberseimer [1923] 1990, p. 338). Hilberseimer wrote: "The

simple cubic bodies: boxes and spheres, prisms and cylinders, pyramids and cones, purely constructive elements, are the fundamental forms of every architecture" (Hilberseimer [1923] 2012, p. 285). And again, Hilberseimer asserts: "Thus structural forms are reduced to their most essential, most general, most simple, most unambiguous. Rampant multiplicity is suppressed; formation occurs according to a general law of form" (Hilberseimer [1923] 2012, p. 286). Implicit in Hilberseimer's words are a correspondence between his analysis of abstract art and its generative possibility for project thinking. Hilberseimer connects abstract art, abstraction in general, with typical and elemental forms—boxes and spheres, prisms and cylinders, pyramids and cones, their mass and volume (an elementality not unlike Rossi's). These statements on art theory coincide with Hilberseimer's concluding thoughts in the last chapter of *Metropolisarchitecture*: "To form great masses by suppressing rampant multiplicity according to a general law [. . .] the general case, the law is respected and emphasised; the exception, however, is put aside, nuance is swept away, measure becomes master, chaos is forced to become form . . . " (Hilberseimer [1927] 2012, pp. 279–80). The multiplicity of the metropolis, with its nervous energy, stimuli and intensity of experience, is suppressed. Against nuance, the typical case is emphasised.

For Hilberseimer, the general and the typical constitute the analytical and formal criteria of the city. The typical forms and programmes of the metropolis catalogued in *Metropolisarchitecture* (blocks, towers, slabs, plinths, offices, factories, housing, hotels) coincide with the typical forms and principles identified by Hilberseimer in abstract art and are transformed into architectural forms which conceptually internalise the forces of the metropolis, distilling the nervous energy where "chaos is forced to become form." Hilberseimer negated the shock of the city by absorbing it, transforming urban shock into productive possibility, which is represented in Hilberseimer's drawings and projects as the architectural analogue of the blasé attitude: the greyness of the graphic tone, the de-coloured contextless background, the uniformity of expression, the repetition of windows, the blankness of façades and the simplified abstraction of cubic forms—a metropolitan form of consciousness and analogical form of the metropolis.
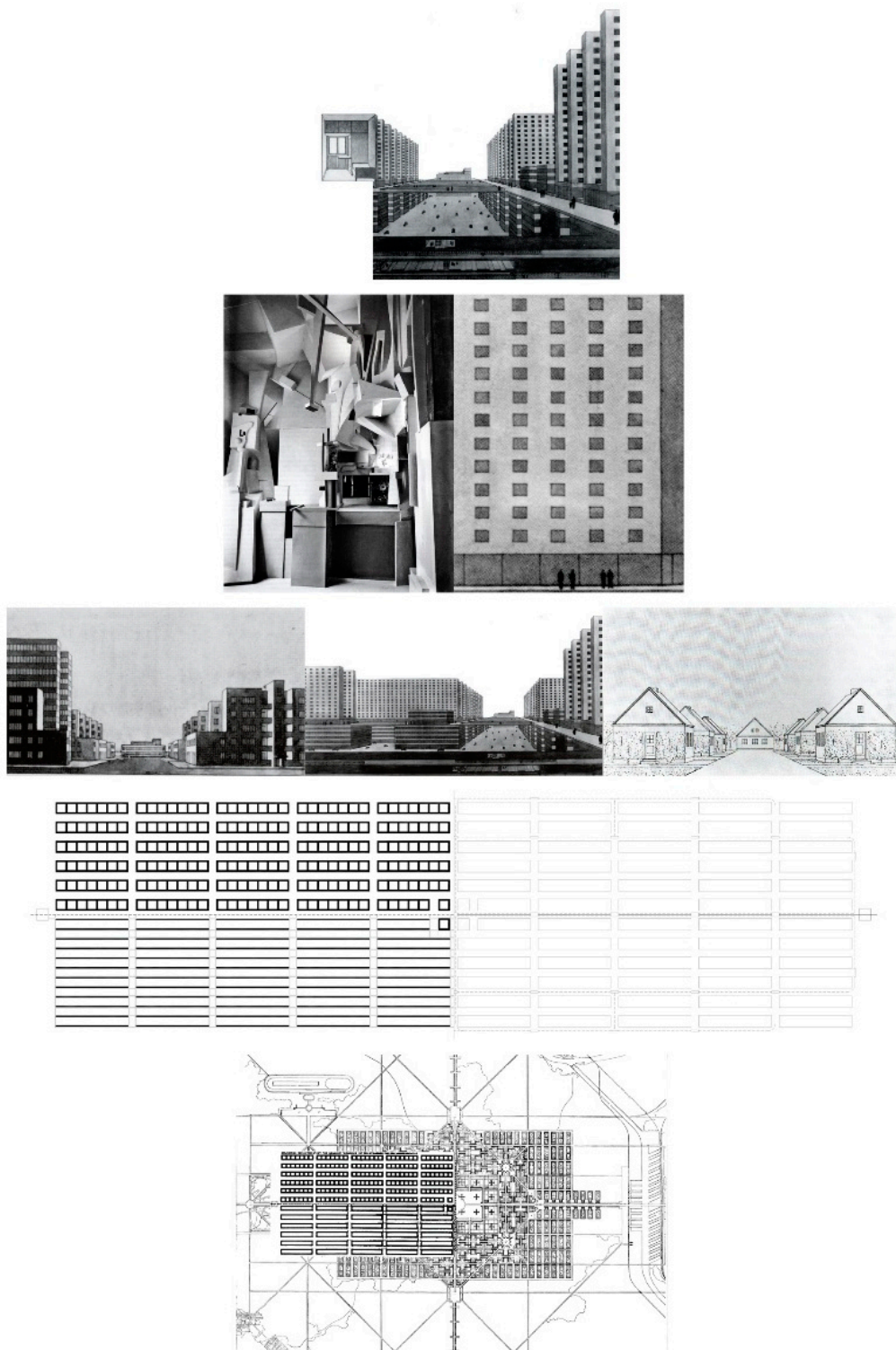
Figure 1. Montage panel by author. While art avant-gardes represented the intensity of the city through collage and assemblage of multifarious elements, Hilberseimer sought to internalise the shock of the metropolis and distilled the "nervous energy" into a language of formally reduced elements and typical forms that could be produced and reproduced in generic schema—an architectural analogue (or analogical form) of Georg Simmel's blasé attitude.

4. Analogical City: Rossi. The Analogue, Collective Memory, the Stranger

Rossi's theory and projects of the city developed in dialogue with those of Hilberseimer's. It is clear in Rossi's projects (in particular his early projects of the 1960s and '70s) he follows a similar formal language to Hilberseimer. The repetition of elements within a single project and across projects as a series, the uniformity of fenestration and the principle of extruding and combining geometric forms is present in both architects' work. For instance, the San Rocco housing district (1966), a collaborative project between Rossi with Giorgio Grassi, is organised as a series of three gridded blocks, which shift off axis from each other. In scale the project recalls the *hofe* blocks of Berlin and Vienna and in the diagrammatic multiplication of blocks invoke the principle of Hilberseimer's High-Rise City. Rossi's Gallaratese housing block (1973), inserted like a montage into what was a peripheral area of Milan, is indebted to the extruded cellular language of Hilberseimer. While in a diagram that shows both San Rocco and Gallaratese, Rossi draws a Hilberseimer-esque "schema," distilling into a few simple lines the formal typology of each project. At the Trieste City Hall project (1974), Rossi uses a principle of linear extrusion, from room to slab such as is present in Hilberseimer's city projects, then punctures the elevation with uniform square windows (see Figure 2). However, in Rossi's texts direct references to Hilberseimer are scarce and Rossi only briefly notes Hilberseimer in the Introduction to the 1973 Rational Architecture exhibition and momentarily in *The Architecture of the City* (Rossi [1973] 1983; Rossi [1996] 1982). Indeed both Hilberseimer's and Rossi's formal language is defined by a rigorous clarity of form but an intense density of thought.

What connects Hilberseimer and Rossi most explicitly is that the city is a founding conceptual reality from which architecture takes its principles, forms and elements and connects architecture to city, society and the individual in a chain of thought. In both Hilberseimer's *Metropolisarchitecture* and Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*, the city comes first. Rossi said: "Architecture came into being with the first traces of the city; it is deeply rooted in the formation of civilisation and is a permanent, universal, and necessary artefact" (Rossi [1996] 1982, p. 21). Both Hilberseimer and Rossi identify the urban types that make up the city, from the high-rises, blocks and slabs described by Hilberseimer in *Metropolisarchitecture*, to the monuments, artefacts and primary elements that Rossi identified in *The Architecture of the City* and would distil into geometric type-forms in his drawings and projects. Both architects studied the city as an entirety, considering the history of the city, the forces that produced the city and how the city functions in its wider spatial territory (regionally and globally). As we have seen, Hilberseimer understood the form of the city as the manifestation of productive forces, society and the individual. We took the blasé attitude as an index of the wider societal ethos of the metropolis and thus the blasé individual is also a social individual, a figure who embodies collective memory. Hilberseimer said the metropolis was the result of the "intersection of the flow of human activity, economics, and spirit" (Hilberseimer [1927] 2012, p. 84) and in a significantly titled section of Hilberseimer's later book *The New City* called "A New Spirit" he writes: "Now as always, the conditions essential to the life of a city are dependent on social, spiritual, political and economic forces. Each change of these forces effects change in the structure of the city" (Hilberseimer 1944, p. 54). These statements recall an important passage in *The Architecture of the City* where Rossi writes that the city is "a material artifact, a man-made object built over time and retaining the traces of time, even if in a discontinuous way;" and it is "in the deepest layers of the urban structure, where certain fundamental characteristics that are common to the entire urban dynamic can be seen" (Rossi [1996] 1982, p. 128). Rossi is speaking about not only the "real structure of the city" as he writes, but "the idea that the city is a synthesis of a series of values. Thus it concerns the collective imagination" (Rossi [1996] 1982, p. 128). For Rossi, the city constitutes the repository of human labour and thought, the collective memory and imagination of its people, which is made real in architectural form. It is perhaps in Rossi's drawings that the notion of collective memory is most lucidly represented.
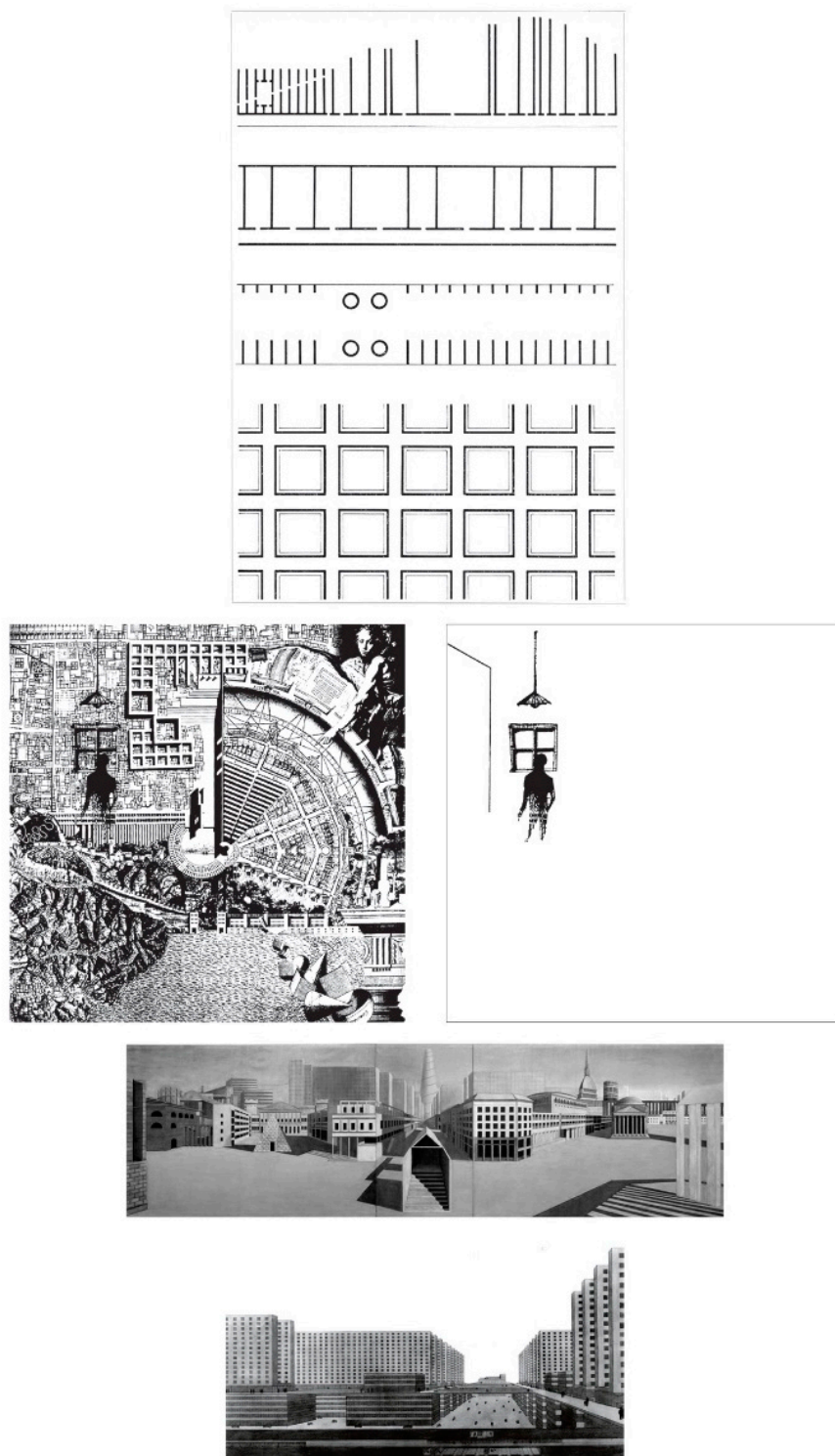
Figure 2. Montage panel by author. Rossi's projects are in dialogue with Hilberseimer's. Rossi developed a formally reduced language of typical elements and forms to be substituted, replaced and exchanged from project to project, always available but never settled, such as in Simmel's notion of the exchangeability of the money economy. The shadowy figure in Rossi's analogical city embodies a Simmel's stranger, who comes today, stays tomorrow but is always estranged. The stranger is the analogical figure of the multitude.

In drawings that Rossi collectively titles *Analogical City*, architectural and urban types are reduced to their geometric type-forms: truncated cones, hollow cubes, tapered or stepped pyramids, cylinders. Domestic objects such as chairs, coffee pots, cups, newspapers, match boxes and cigarette packets are rescaled to that of the city. Through repetition, combination and recombination of typical geometric and architectural or urban elements, their estrangement from one drawing to another, the altering of scale and arrangement create a discourse across each project and with the city. A solitary shadowy figure, not unlike the nomadic figures who occupy Hilberseimer's city drawings and of which he speaks in *The New City* (Hilberseimer 1944, pp. 19–20) (the nomad as a social type who recurs constantly in history), also seem to inhabit Rossi's urban studies (for example (Rossi 1993)). It is possible to draw a link here to Simmel's figure of "the Stranger."

In Simmel's essay "The Stranger" (Simmel [1908] 1971) he elaborates another archetypal urban figure who operates in a dialogue with the blasé individual. The stranger is a wanderer who does not come today and leave tomorrow, but rather "comes today and stays tomorrow" without settling down or properly fitting in (Simmel [1908] 1971, p. 143). Like the blasé individual, the stranger is defined through a set of contradictions: a state of detachment and attachment, the union of closeness and remoteness, the extending of social relations without ever "belonging" in a group, a mobility that provides contact with everything but not bound to any one element or place. Those contradictions are staged in Rossi's drawings as critical principles where all elements can be moved around, substituted, replaced, exchanged, detached from one project or drawing and reattached within another project, drawing or place. The elements and objects float within the same plane such as is evoked in Simmel's observations when he writes that the different stimuli of the money economy "all float with the same specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money" (Simmel [1903] 1971, p. 330). In Rossi's drawings, a tower can be substituted for another tower, or a column, or a coffee pot; a block can be exchanged for another block, or court, or stair, or cigarette pack; the ground of the city can be replaced by the ground of another city, or the surface of the drawing, or the surface of a table top. All elements are replaceable. All elements are continuously available but are never quite settled.

Perhaps the project that most represents the notion of stranger and demonstrates the principles of scaling and exchangeability at stake in Simmel's analysis of the stranger is Rossi's 1976 collage project entitled Analogical City: Panel (undertaken as a collaboration with Bruno Reichlin, Eraldo Consolacio and Fabio Reinhart). The Analogical City: Panel project is a montage of Rossi's own projects and those of his references: San Rocco (1966), Modena Cemetery (1973) and Segrate (1965) are positioned prominently as the main figural elements while Gallaratese (1973) cuts into the image from left to centre; a Renaissance Ideal City organises the right hand side of the image, Piranesi's Carceri are montaged below Gallaratese, projects by Palladio, Le Corbusier, Terragni are all present. As Tafuri has observed: " . . . a fragment of a Renaissance treatise is equal to an eighteenth-century project or to one by Rossi" (Tafuri 1976, p. 13). All projects float within the frame of the analogical city. Projects can be substituted, replaced and exchanged by anything else. Montaged into the city is a shadowy figure, a stranger who is simultaneously within and outwith the city, attached and detached, belonging and not belonging. The strange figure, who is constantly present in Rossi's drawings, "comes today and stays tomorrow" and can be read as a floating signifier standing in as a social individual, a mass subject embodying the notion of collective memory and an analogue of the multitude.

5. Conclusions: Metropolis and Multitude

Updating Hilberseimer's analysis of the metropolis as it coincided with Simmel's blasé attitude and reading into the relationship between Rossi's analogical city and the stranger, it is possible to speculate that a contemporary figure can be situated with the multitude—a collective linguistic subject, always mobile and "united [. . .] by 'not feeling at home'" as Paolo Virno has said (Virno 2004, p. 34). Elaborating on the connection between metropolis, language and multitude in his essay "Three Remarks Concerning the Multitude's Subjectivity and Its Aesthetic Component," Virno writes: "The metropolis actually is a linguistic formation, an environment that is above all constituted by

objectivised discourse, by preconstructed code, and by materialised grammar" (Virno 2008, p. 33). For Virno the metropolis is built on language, and language is the material of contemporary capitalist production, corresponding with the linguistic subject of the multitude and the social and intellectual forms of life of the metropolis. There is resonance here with Simmel who wrote: "the money economy and the domination of the intellect stand in the closest relationship to one another" (Simmel [1903] 1971, p. 326). Hilberseimer's projects of the 1920s were developed at a paradigmatic moment in the development of advanced capitalism where the "immaterial" production of commercial work based on intellect and language in the broadest sense, was replacing the material production of the factory. Then, in the 1960s and '70s, when Rossi was developing his programme of analogical architecture, the transition from material to immaterial production was amplified and the notion of multitude appeared, where "raw material" became knowledge, information and social relations. Today the precarious multitude has replaced the anonymous mass subject.

In *A Grammar of the Multitude* Virno has analysed the consequences of the increasingly abstract structures of contemporary forms of life and developed a theoretical and philosophic framework through which we might develop critical strategies for operating within (or against) capitalist relations. In his "Three Remarks" essay Virno turns specifically to the aesthetic sphere and puts forward the preconditions for an aesthetic theory of the multitude. Virno argues that with the centrality of linguistic capacity in advanced capitalism, language as a form of critique is needed, "to translate economic and productive powers of language into political and aesthetic powers" (Virno 2008, p. 45). Drawing on Walter Benjamin's "Work of Art" (Benjamin [1936] 1992) essay Virno proposes the possibility of repetition to absorb the shock of metropolitan life and capitalist exploitation toward what Virno calls, "uniqueness without aura" (Virno 2008, p. 45) as a critical authorship. Virno puts forward Marx's concept of real abstraction to take advantage of the abstraction of contemporary capitalism and "to give a body to the general intellect" (Virno 2008, p. 45).

If there is an aesthetic theory of the multitude, we can say that there is also an architectural theory of the multitude and that the points made by Virno resonate with the argument put forward here. The centrality of language in the economy today calls for a reassessment of models of architecture and critique based on linguistic capacity such as we find in Hilberseimer's critique of market speculation, Tafuri and Cacciari's strategies of negation, the linguistic and analogical form of Rossi's analogical city, the formal strategy of repetition and exchangeability staged in Hilberseimer's and Rossi's projects, abstraction as a critical operation, "uniqueness without aura" as a critical authorship where authorship coincides with the agency of the subject expressed through a collective formal language, and where formal language condenses with the abstraction of the multitude. The productive power of language at stake in the multitude can be translated toward an aesthetic and architectural language as a critical project against the market urbanism of today.

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