

Fascism Into Fashion: The Depoliticization of the Italian Fascist Monument, the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana

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John Cabot University

The Graduate School Department of Art History

Master of Arts
in
Art History

Fascism Into Fashion: The Depoliticization of the Italian Fascist Monument, the
Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana

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Abstract

The contemporary reception of the Fascist edifice the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana has been altered since the rental of the edifice by the fashion brand Fendi to serve as their new headquarters. This thesis analyzes existing international and Italian scholarship regarding the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana within the E42 project and Italian Fascists Architecture, to expose the depoliticization of the building. The thesis relies on primary documents many of which are unedited to support research and discussion throughout its five chapters. The reception of the building since the rental of the building by Fendi is evaluated by comparing various outlets including news, social media, brand-campaigns, advertisements, and publications. Findings reveal that after the conclusion of the Second World War, the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana has been presented to audiences without considering the Fascist function of the building. Instead, the focus of the Palazzo is purely on the aesthetic elements and characteristics, of which have been copied and capitalized on by the fashion brand Fendi. How Fendi has marketed the qualities of the Palazzo is itself a legacy of fascist aesthetics. By focusing on the timeless elements of the building and presenting it without the context of said elements, the promoting strategy used by the brand is a relic of fascism. In many ways, architecture and discourse has altered the reconciliation of Italian innovation and the existence of a Fascist past. The aestheticization of the building without considering its historical context demonstrates the dangers of normalizing sites of memory. How those sites of memory are perceived and changed throughout time implicates the socio-cultural approach to those monuments.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to three women in my family. To my mother, Kristel, who has raised me to strive and fight for what I want — to never surrender on account of anyone or anything, and push myself beyond the boundaries that life inevitably provides. To my grandmother, Joy, who's name namesake is what she sparks in others. Thank you for your continued love, support, and faith in everything I do. To my sister, Aleksa, thank you for keeping my edge sharp and my heart soft. All of you have made me the woman I am today, I love you.

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1. Introduction

During Mussolini's Fascist reign, many innovations, construction projects, and modernization efforts were made in the name of *patrimonio*. The empire that Mussolini aimed to materialize was to reimagine Italy for the Fascist era and future of Italy. Changes and advancements conducted during the Fascist period advertised itself as efforts that would improve the quality of life in Italian cities and renewed a sense of splendor. The restructuring of the entire city of Rome was one of the largest and most impactful agendas that the Fascist state conducted. This vast undertaking included demolitions in various neighborhoods of the city, most notably la Spina dei Borghi and Alessandrino, constructions of major road systems like Via Imperiale, urban planning of new cosmopolitan areas such as *Citta Universitaria*, and finally, the construction of an ideal Italian Fascist city, the E42. The context in which alterations and additions cannot be overlooked. The project explored in this thesis is the E42 area which is centralized by the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.

The Palazzo was and continues to be an emblematic edifice for the Fascist government and the people of Italy. In developing a 'Third Rome', or a third Roman Empire, Mussolini carefully chose the building's design and intended function to symbolize and impose the values of the regime. Although the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana exhibits Fascist characteristics and traditional elements that reference antiquity, today many do not recognize the political and social implications behind the structure. The lack of consideration of the building's Fascist roots by Italian scholars, officials, and executives, results in a shift in focus and an omission of the past, thereby changing the perception of the building and, even more so, of history itself. In turn, the

basing of headquarters of the international luxury fashion brand Fendi in the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, since 2015, has compounded this amnesia. New narratives have been and continue to be created to fit the controlling political party's version of history, which alters past realities while masking them in plain sight.

The E42 neighbourhood was a project aimed to commemorate the achievements of Mussolini's regime and present their majesty to the international community by means of a world fair.¹ The world fair planned an Olympics of Civilization. It was to function like the traditional Olympics, consisting of participants from countries around the globe. However, instead of athletics, these competitions would focus on culture.² Choosing culture as the defining element of a civilization would allow the regime to use the event as a vehicle to display the past achievements of Romans alongside the regime's contemporary contributions, thereby continuing the cultural heritage of Rome and its citizens. In this context, the centerpiece of the regime's project was the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. Since the E42 was meant to immortalize the new Roman empire, the architecture involved in the project and especially the Palazzo had to exemplify the qualities and values advocated by the Fascist government. The architecture of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana represents the reinvention of the past through modern methods exemplifying Rome as an everlasting power, igniting pride in the Italian populace and serving as a symbol for other states to recognize.

This thesis explores the significance of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana as a Fascist monument, a physical manifestation and even a manifesto of Mussolini's regime. The style,

¹ Fuller, Mia. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (1996): 397–418. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/261172>. p. 398.

² Fuller. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." p. 399.

design elements, and some of the functions of the building remain explicitly Fascist to this day. The question that this thesis aims to ask is why this is negated in the post-war era by Italian scholars, government executives, and cultural officials and continues today. The denial, and worse still, adjustment of the past, pose a threat to both the study of history and future sentiments regarding Fascist regimes — endangering the Italian population to repeat the past regardless of their attempts to modify the events of pre- and post-World War II.

This thesis starts with a historiographical chapter analyzing international and Italian scholarship about the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, Fascist architecture, memory studies, and reception; chapter two explores the relationship between Rationalist architecture, the Littorio style or Fascist style, and how this recasts the Palazzo. The creation, construction, and art history of the E42 neighborhood and the Palazzo are detailed within the second chapter; chapter three outlines Fendi's occupation of the Palazzo, evaluating Fendi's use of the building in campaigns and other advertisements as a motif for the brand; chapter four applies the framework of memory studies when examining the contemporary reception of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.

2. Historiographical Analysis: International versus Italian

Scholarship about the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana

The following section evaluates literature written in both Italian and English concerning the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. It is crucial to compare the scholarship written in Italy versus foreign publications since they reveal discrepancies between the information relayed to the public while simultaneously providing insight into the reception of the building to modern day viewers. Reception is an important art-historical approach that focuses not on art itself but rather how it signifies for viewers in a given social and historical context. In this regard, how the viewer processes and interprets the architecture directly impacts the meaning. Taking this approach and applying it to the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana demonstrates the problematic reception surrounding its creation and significance.

The literature review provides an in-depth analysis of publications that examine topics that are cited in this thesis. The articles presented reveal discrepancies that, albeit are different, are present in both international and Italian scholarship. The first section of this chapter will focus on international scholarship regarding the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, Fascist architecture, reception, and other elements that will be discussed and analyzed in the scope of this thesis.

Most of the articles written outside of Italy provide comparisons and cite Italian scholarship, such as international scholars Jelena Loncar, Paola Somma, Mia Fuller, and Anna Notario. These authors focus on the Palazzo della Civiltà and the surrounding area. Mia Fuller and Anna Notario focus on the project of the E42 as a whole, arguing that this area was made to

be a model Fascist city.³ Somma and Loncar, on the other hand, analyze the Palazzo as being one of the most important buildings created during Mussolini's reign and how it has been used by Fendi as its headquarters.⁴ Somma, Fuller, Notario, and Loncar cite Italian scholarship to strengthen their respective arguments, however, certain elements pertaining to their articles are not mentioned.⁵ Patterns can be identified when reading the literature written by scholars outside of Italy. However, most of the articles pertaining to the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana do not cite or include if any primary documents and rely mostly on secondary sources for their arguments. Certain characteristics of the building are not mentioned, such as the sculptures that are displayed in the porticos of the Palazzo, which although are a post-World War II addition, are Fascist.⁶ The significance of these additions is paramount as they demonstrate that although the regime dissolved, their Fascist programs were completed decades after the conclusion of the Second World War.⁷

³ Notaro, Anna. "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)." *GeoJournal* 51, no. 1/2 (2000): 15–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41147493>. p. 15; Fuller, Mia. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (1996): 397–418. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/261172>. p. 397.

⁴ Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, p. 80; Loncar, Jelena. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning." In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, pp. 92-110. Routledge, 2020. p. 92.

⁵ Fuller, Mia. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (1996): 397–418. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/261172>. pp. 415, 416, 417; Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, pp. 79-91. Routledge, 2020. pp. 88, 89, 90. Loncar, Jelena. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, pp. 92-110. Routledge, 2020. pp 108, 109, 110.; Notaro, Anna. "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)." *GeoJournal* 51, no. 1/2 (2000): 15–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41147493>. pp. 21, 22.

⁶ Casciato, Maristella, and Poretti, Sergio. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano: Federico Motta, 2002. p. 205. Translation by Deepl.

⁷ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 205

Italian fascist architecture is analyzed by Yvonne Ghirardo, Harald Bodenschatz, and Aristotle Kallis. All the authors, like those previously presented, include Italian scholarship.⁸ Ghirardo and Bodenschatz particularly focus on architectural developments during the Fascist control of Italy.⁹ Rationalism, an Italian Modernist architectural movement, is discussed at length in Kallis, Bodenschatz, and Ghirardo's publications. All of them argue that the Rationalist style of architecture had close ties to Fascism and the government.¹⁰ However, only Kallis uses and explains the term *Stile Littorio* which was the official style of the government.¹¹ Kallis, discusses Fascist Italian Architecture like Bodenschatz and Ghirardo but frames the situation in a historical and political manner allowing for the reader to see the motivations behind aesthetic choices.¹²

Mia Fuller, in the *Journal of Contemporary History* analyzes the Fascist plans for the E42 and compares them to the colonial agenda that Italy had in Africa during the time leading up to WWII. Fuller compares the plans that were going to be carried out in Ethiopia by Mussolini's government to the plans of the E42 area. Her argument is that these efforts mirrored one another in how the Fascist regime aimed to colonize Africa but also to recolonize Rome.¹³ Both projects

⁸ Bodenschatz, Harold. "Urbanism Architecture and Dictatorship: Memory in Transition." Essay. In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. pp. 65, 66; Ghirardo, Diane Yvonne. "Italian architects and Fascist politics: An evaluation of the Rationalist's role in regime building." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39, no. 2 (1980): 109-127. pp. 125, 126, 127; Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. pp. 276, 277, 279, 280.

⁹Bodenschatz "Urbanism Architecture and Dictatorship: Memory in Transition." pp. 54, 55; Ghirardo. "Italian architects and Fascist politics: An evaluation of the Rationalist's role in regime building." pp. 57, 71, 72, 73.

¹⁰ Bodenschatz, Harold. "Urbanism Architecture and Dictatorship: Memory in Transition." Essay. In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. pp 55, 56, 57; Ghirardo, Diane Yvonne. "Italian architects and Fascist politics: An evaluation of the Rationalist's role in regime building." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39, no. 2 (1980): 109-127. pp. 109, 111, 112.; Kallis, Aristotle. "Futures Made Present: Architecture, Monument, and the Battle for the 'Third Way' in Fascist Italy", *Fascism* 7, 1 (2018): 45-79, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00701004>. pp. 45, 49, 50.

¹¹Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 246

¹² Kallis. *The Third Rome*. pp. 245, 246, 247, 253.

¹³ Fuller, Mia. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (1996): 397-418. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/261172>. p. 407.

in Rome and Addis Ababa, according to Fuller's arguments, presented audiences how Fascist conquering and *civilizing* respective colonial enterprises created a renewed sense of culture.¹⁴ In this way, the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, being the monument dedicated to Italian civilization, sought to display the superiority of Italians and thus provided a valid reason to invade and colonize foreign, 'lesser developed' societies that needed to be civilized and thus liberated by means of Fascist control.¹⁵ Fuller's main argument is that Addis Ababa is the first effort to build an ideal Fascist city and reveals the regime's experimentation in urbanism.¹⁶

Anna Notaro, on the other hand, writes about E42 in *Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City*. Her aim is to demonstrate the Fascist dialogues propagated by the regime being translated directly in the layout and structure of the EUR neighborhood. She analyzes the design and use of the buildings included in the project as translations of the Fascist agenda.¹⁷ Providing a brief overview on the history of the project, its intended outcome, and the multiple components included in the original plans, Notaro emphasizes how the regime aimed to modernize classical references.¹⁸ A tool Fascism used to gain popularity and support was tying the E42 to the history of classical Rome linking antiquity to the modern day.¹⁹ The exhibition and the implications of the E42 World Fair in the context of the period of its announcement and construction demonstrate the need that the Italian Fascist government had in proving their superiority before

¹⁴ Fuller. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." p. 411.

¹⁵ Fuller. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." p. 413.

¹⁶ Fuller. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." pp. 413, 414.

¹⁷ Notaro, Anna. "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)." *GeoJournal* 51, no. 1/2 (2000): 15–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41147493>. p. 15

¹⁸ Notaro, Anna. "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)." p. 16.

¹⁹ Notaro, Anna. "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)." p. 16.

the outbreak of the World War.²⁰ Although she discusses the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, her publication is mostly focused on the entirety of the E42 project — thus resulting in a broad but not so focused analysis on the individual architectural components, but rather, on the whole construction, layout and design of the neighborhood.

Yvonne Ghirardo, in her analysis entitled *Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalists' Role in Regime Building* provides an in-depth examination of the architecture advocated for by the Fascist state and the Rationalist movement in Italy. Ghirardo thoroughly compares the discourse of Rationalist and modernist architecture in the context of the political climate of Italy. She outlines how Italian scholarly literature ignores the relationship between buildings and their historical construction, or, in other words, attempts to analyze buildings without considering their Fascist roots.²¹ Italian scholars according to Ghirardo's investigations, argue that architects pretended to be Fascists in order to have their work sponsored by and carried out in a time of totalitarian control.²² The main objective of her publication is to disprove these claims and highlight the dangers in writing about architecture without considering the historical and political context of buildings. By reading the publications and manifestos of Rationalist architects she reveals their connection to Fascist dialogues and aims to prove how Rationalism celebrated Fascism.²³ They both used a similar method to inspire support for their cause. Each connects themselves to a celebrated past, while simultaneously

²⁰ Notaro, Anna. "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)." p. 21

²¹ Ghirardo, Diane Yvonne. "Italian architects and Fascist politics: An evaluation of the Rationalist's role in regime building." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39, no. 2 (1980): 109-127. p. 109

²² Ghirardo, Diane Yvonne. "Italian architects and Fascist politics: An evaluation of the Rationalist's role in regime building." pp. 109, 110.

²³ Ghirardo, Diane Yvonne. "Italian architects and Fascist politics: An evaluation of the Rationalist's role in regime building." p. 113.

asserting their modern and new methods.²⁴ Her study is rare and crucial since she considers how Italian scholarship and international publications differ from one another while maintaining that they both refuse to engage with the realities of the historical epoch.

Harald Bodenschatz in *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture: Reception and Legacy* compares the legacies of Fascism and how that translates to the memory of both the regime itself and the architecture left behind. He focuses on how urban planning, construction, and architecture are inevitably tied to an exchange of ideas. The aforementioned elements are all complexly intertwined and cannot be separated from each other since they reflect the ideas and the leadership of the landscape in which they are created.²⁵ He discusses the history and scholarship surrounding previously Fascist countries in relation to the architecture and art that were created during these regime periods.

Comparing monuments in Germany, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and Italy provide examples that demonstrate how memory and reception has changed in the modern world. Bodenschatz focuses particularly on Italy and Germany since these two countries had a specific far-right fascist regime type that although different, were equally extreme in their ideologies and objectives.²⁶ Italy's dictatorship, as he labels it, proves that state architecture was a form of self-expression for the dictator and his advocated concepts.²⁷ In Bodenschatz's argument, state-sponsored constructions were never about the buildings themselves but rather a medium to create living propaganda.²⁸ He also outlines how the contemporary reception of the buildings has changed from their original condition, allowing for a new, politicized, false discourse to

²⁴ Ghirardo, Diane Yvonne. "Italian architects and Fascist politics: An evaluation of the Rationalist's role in regime building." p. 119.

²⁵ Bodenschatz, Harold. "Urbanism Architecture and Dictatorship: Memory in Transition." Essay. In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. pp. 54, 55.

²⁶ Bodenschatz. "Urbanism Architecture and Dictatorship: Memory in Transition." p. 56.

²⁷ Bodenschatz. "Urbanism Architecture and Dictatorship: Memory in Transition." p. 57.

²⁸ Bodenschatz. "Urbanism Architecture and Dictatorship: Memory in Transition." p. 64.

overwhelm the truth.²⁹ Bodenschatz urges scholars to look at memory history and architectural developments not as separate entities but rather a necessary combination to understand the influence of reception and Fascist architectural structures.

Paola Somma, in the same Routledge Companion, published an essay specifically focusing on the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. She outlines how, as the centerpiece for Mussolini's exhibition project of E42, it was the symbol for the regime, its power, and its continual legacy.³⁰ She describes how the building after the war has undergone many transformations to alter the reception of the viewers.³¹ However, the most impactful and contemporary alteration is the conversion of the building as the new headquarters for the fashion group Fendi. How the fashion line has rebranded the building has thoroughly masked the Fascist roots of the Palazzo.³² Upon being interviewed, the CEO of Fendi has expressed only positive remarks about the building's history and how the architecture fits the Fendi brand. Specifically, the Palazzo is "an aesthetic masterpiece beyond a discussion of politics" Pietro Beccari, Fendi's CEO and chairman states.³³

Somma focuses on how modern dialogues have altered the way in which people view architecture such as the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana as a building that was built during the Fascist epoch as opposed to being recognized as a *Fascist building*.³⁴ The separation of context from structure, a purely formalist reading, is something that Somma repeatedly points out, and expresses the dangers of not recognizing the framework in which something was designed and executed; especially since the entirety of the E42 project was an exhibition aimed to highlight the

²⁹ Bodenschatz. "Urbanism Architecture and Dictatorship: Memory in Transition." p. 65.

³⁰ Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, pp. 79-91. Routledge, 2020. p. 80.

³¹ Somma. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion" p. 79.

³² Somma. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion" p. 79.

³³ Somma. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion" p. 79.

³⁴ Somma. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion" p. 79.

accomplishments of Mussolini and his Fascist regime. The disparity between context and the building has increased since Fendi's rental of the Fascist monument.³⁵ Somma targets the aforementioned issue while also discussing how the Italian government has turned public spaces into private spaces.³⁶ It is closed to the public, making the public symbol into a private space, thereby prioritizing enterprises instead of the populace.³⁷ Her analysis is comprehensive however, little to no use of primary, unedited documents are included in her research. Aspects of the building, such as and post-World War II sculptural additions, are also not mentioned in her essay. The paper focuses mainly on the Italian government's role in the upkeep and subsequent rental of the Palazzo post-World War II.

Jelena Loncar, in her essay entitled "F is for... Fluctuating Symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its Shifting Meaning" explores the topics of Fendi's use of the Palazzo, their rejection of criticism, and their campaigns featuring the edifice, all of which Somma also includes, however Loncar does so more in depth. She argues that the shifts between conception and use is what has changed the reception of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. Historic meaning and aesthetic value in this regard, according to Loncar, point to a deep-seated contention between attitudes amongst the people of Italy.³⁸ Her main line of inquiry is why the issue surrounding Fascist architectural discourse is ongoing. She focuses specifically on the Roman tradition of mythifying any dissertation that the populace wishes to embed in the culture.³⁹ This approach is historical, as using symbols and propaganda to associate people with deities was done by the

³⁵ Somma. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion" p. 80.

³⁶ Somma. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion" p. 83.

³⁷ Somma. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion" p. 86.

³⁸ Loncar, Jelena. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, pp. 92-110. Routledge, 2020. p. 92.

³⁹ Loncar. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" p. 92.

Roman empire. Mussolini and Fendi conducted this process in order to alter the perception of the Palazzo, she argues.⁴⁰

Exploring Rationalism, she provides information and evidence linking this movement to the Fascist regime stating that Fascism as a political ideology and Rationalism as an architectural style cannot be analyzed without considering the other since they are linked.⁴¹ Furthermore, she provides a complex analysis as to how the actual design of the Palazzo impacts the psyche of the viewers, referencing architectural theorists who gauge the way in which architecture impacts the subconscious of the observer in question.⁴² Lastly, Loncar supports her connection between Roman mythifying and Fendi mythifying by demonstrating the brands use of iconic elements of the Palazzo in multiple campaigns abroad and in Italy to associate the Palazzo and Fendi as one entity.⁴³ Her paper includes an analysis of some Italian scholarship; however, she focuses mostly on international information and campaigns.⁴⁴ Her paper does differ from those previously analyzed due to the fact that she references some information concerning the statues and Fascist carvings on the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana but not nearly enough to understand how since they were left in their original condition, continue to affect the reception of the building today.⁴⁵

Aristotle Kallis is an author who has published multiple books concerning Fascism and its lasting legacy. Specifically his book entitled *The Third Rome, 1922-1942: The Making of the Fascist Capital* explores the architectural structures, city planning, and urban design elements that were incorporated during the Fascist period. He analyzes the aforementioned elements and

⁴⁰ Loncar. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" p. 97.

⁴¹ Loncar. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" p. 100.

⁴² Loncar. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" p. 98.

⁴³ Loncar. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" p. 98.

⁴⁴ Loncar. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" pp. 99, 100, 101.

⁴⁵ Loncar. "F is for... fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" p. 101.

compares them in order to understand how the regime established a style that reflected the ideals and values advocated for by the state.⁴⁶ Taking quotes from Mussolini, Rationalist manifestos, and other publications, he proves that *Stile Littorio*, an architectural style of design, is closely connected to the objectives of Rationalist architecture and the ideas of Fascism.⁴⁷ Furthermore, by studying the E42 project, he reveals how the exposition and the multilateral efforts included in the plan, all were meant to and continue to be a physical, tangible expression of political goals.⁴⁸ The positioning of the E42 *quartiere* is southwest of the city. In this way, Mussolini's presentation of Italian civilization was close to the sea thus achieving the goal of expansion towards the Mediterranean, as mentioned by Mia Fuller, a goal that was pertinent to his colonization effort in Ethiopia as it was in Rome.⁴⁹

Interestingly, Kallis is one of the only scholars who discusses the process of choosing the design for the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. A major competition was held for the Palazzo as well as all of the other major architectural structures included in the E42 expo. However, what distinguished the competition for the winning design for the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana was the inclusion of architects Piacentini and Pagano as participants in the competition.⁵⁰ The architects were part of the committee in charge of choosing other works for the exposition. The fact that members of the committee decided to join as participants marks how important the design is for the Palazzo.⁵¹ Although none of the architects named won the competition, Kallis does not necessarily divulge those who created the winning design. Instead, he focuses on the

⁴⁶ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. pp. 245, 246.

⁴⁷ Kallis. *The Third Rome*. p. 246.

⁴⁸ Kallis. *The Third Rome*. p. 253.

⁴⁹ Kallis. *The Third Rome*. p. 245; Fuller, Mia. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (1996): 397–418. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/261172>. p. 408.

⁵⁰ Kallis. *The Third Rome*. p. 253.

⁵¹ Kallis. *The Third Rome*. p. 253.

requirements and prerequisites that were postulated for the competition and how those elements further affirm the Fascist nature of the now constructed building.

Kallis, in a different publication entitled *Fascist Ideology, Territory, and Expansion in Italy and Germany* conducts a correlative examination on the expansionist policies of both Germany and Italy post-World War I through the outbreak of the Second World War. He emphasizes that the expansionist agendas of both Fascist regimes have parallels accosted to the political policies of each respective nation.⁵² He prefaces the work by mentioning that in recent history the Nazi regime has been studied far more vigorously than Mussolini's government although both are considered Fascist administrations.⁵³ Kallis has two main objects, first, to determine how each Fascist system used ideology and tradition to unify the people.⁵⁴ Second, he explores how these dialogues are converted into action through foreign and internal policies and development.⁵⁵

A crucial topic that Kallis further discusses in his book is after the conclusion of World War II, how each respective country managed, or in some cases ignored, its Fascist record. In this way, Kallis also includes how these nations attempted to reconstruct or rebuild national pride in a way that fostered more positive outcomes.⁵⁶ However, these efforts, along with the overall domestic sentiment regarding such topics, show just how deep the Fascist period impacted the cultural and political progress post World War II. Kallis notes that in the events leading up to the takeover and the March on Rome, Italy had struggled to establish a unified national identity.⁵⁷ Before and even after the Risorgimento, although the Italian state was created, internal turmoil

⁵² Kallis, Aristotle. *Fascist ideology: territory and expansionism in Italy and Germany*, 1922-1945. Routledge, 2002. p. 2

⁵³ Kallis. *Fascist ideology*: p. 3.

⁵⁴ Kallis. *Fascist ideology*: p. 5.

⁵⁵ Kallis. *Fascist ideology*: p. 5.

⁵⁶ Kallis. *Fascist ideology*: p. 7.

⁵⁷ Kallis. *Fascist ideology*: p. 11.

resulted in unstable unity. The Fascist government took advantage of this weakness by creating a system of control that would unite the people under Fascism.⁵⁸ Mussolini's administration, in this regard, took the ideas of the previous empires of Rome, and spearheaded an ideological campaign uniting the past with the future. Due to this, once the Fascist state dissolved, the Italian nation had to reconstruct their idea of unification.⁵⁹ Instead of dealing with the past and the issues that arose post Second World War, the Fascist history of Italy is still widely ignored.

The overarching differences between Italian and international scholarship is both in content and in sentiment regarding the Palazzo. Literature published outside of Italy omits many design details and architectural facts, such as the Carrara marble statues in the porticos, information regarding the Rationalist movement, and background on the architects involved in the project. These exclusions are due to the fact that primary documents and other information regarding the aforementioned elements of the Palazzo are written in Italian and difficult to consult. However, the diversity of international scholarship must be noted. Scholars abroad in this regard, do not look at the Palazzo with a formalist eye, but rather, think contextually while analyzing the aesthetics of the building.

The following literature reviewed is scholarship that was written by Italian scholars or publications written in Italian. Italian scholarship is more limited in terms of references, as it usually only cites other Italian scholars or literature published in Italy. One important hindrance is the unexplained censorship of important materials. Although physically in archives and present in the lists of available documents, publications such as the original *bando de concorso* for the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and other primary documents are prohibited from being consulted. The significance of the aforementioned speaks to a greater discrepancy between

⁵⁸ Kallis. *Fascist ideology*: pp. 12, 28, 36.

⁵⁹ Kallis. *Fascist ideology*: p. 52.

public transparency regarding the history of Fascism in Italy, influencing the types of publications available regarding this subject.

Sergio Poretti, Maristella Casciato, and Carlo Cresti published works that address the topics of the E42 project and its respective designs. Cresti, Casciato, and Poretti include more primary information and documentation than international scholars who focus on the same or similar topic.⁶⁰ Certain elements of the E42 and of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana are included in detail that are either omitted in foreign publications or are only mentioned in passing such as the allegorical sculptures and the status of the building after the conclusion of the Second World War.⁶¹ However, all of these scholars, while stating that the Palazzo is a Fascist creation, do not focus on the implication of this fact in the present day. The Italian Ministry of Culture has published multiple works regarding the Palazzo, EUR area of Rome, and the circumstances surrounding the rental of the building to Fendi. The Ministry of Culture follows the pattern of Italian scholarship and focuses solely on the aesthetics of the building while minimizing the historical importance of the Palazzo.

The most comprehensive book, Italian or otherwise, concerning exclusively the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana is by Sergio Poretti and Maristella Casciato, and entitled *Il Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: Architettura e Costruzione del Colosseo Quadrato*. This book details the history of the building, the circumstances behind its construction, the details in the design, and its legacy. It is one of the only books that mentions the criticism Italy received post-war because the

⁶⁰ Casciato, Maristella, and Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano: Federico Motta, 2002. pp. 37,62, 95,115, 167, 225; Cresti, Carlo. *Architetti e Architetture dell'“Era Fascista”*. Firenze. A. Pontecorboli, 2015. pp. 157, 158 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

⁶¹ Casciato, Maristella, and Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano: Federico Motta, 2002. pp. 205, 209, 210, 216.; Cresti, Carlo. *Architetti e Architetture dell'“Era Fascista”*. Firenze. A. Pontecorboli, 2015. p. 155 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

building is the most iconic and celebratory product of Fascism.⁶² Instead of destroying the monumental building during the *damnatio memoriae*, an ancient process of removing images of people who were deemed as dishonorable, the government decided to preserve it since its potential destruction would cause a further call for the eradication of the entire E42 neighbourhood.⁶³ The author's opinion shines through the literature since, according to Poretti, after the conclusion of the World War, the building continues to be a signal for modernization for Italy and the world.⁶⁴ This unabashed approach of the building is distressing and confirms that although not done physically, an ideological *damnatio memoriae* is being applied when discussing the Palazzo.

Specifically important to this thesis, however, are the discourses in this book that are not present in any other sources. Poretti and Casciato detail the lives of all three of the architects who designed the building, while other scholars only focus on one architect, Ernesto Lapadula. The biographies of each architect are pertinent since they outline their architectural projects in Italy, their respective relationships to the Fascist regime, and how all three were introduced to one another prior to their collaboration.⁶⁵ Information concerning primary documents consulted for these biographies are included and referenced, since their biographies cover the lives of the architects before the rise of Mussolini's government all the way through post-World War II, up until their deaths.⁶⁶ No other source presents information regarding the architects as a collaborative unit and then also as individual architects working during Fascist control of Italy. This is crucial information as Mario Romano, Ernesto Lapadula, and Giovanni Guerrini created

⁶² Casciato, Maristella, and Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano: Federico Motta, 2002. pp. 155, 156 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

⁶³ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 155.

⁶⁴ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 11.

⁶⁵ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 229.

⁶⁶ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 234.

projects with the regime independently, resulting in various exoduses post war, and even the destruction of all the records of Romano upon his death, which is extremely telling.⁶⁷

Stated multiple times throughout this literature review is the lack of material present in all of the international sources presented concerning the post-World War II addition of the twenty-eight sculptures displayed on the ground floor of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. Poretti and Casciato are the only ones to not only mention the statues, to chronicle the creation of each work, to provide background information behind the additional elements, the artist behind them, and even, a brief biography of each artist. These sculptures, which were added by the committee and included in the finalized design plans for the Palazzo, were never completed by the regime. Due to the outbreak of World War and the subsequent dissolution of the Fascist government, the sculptures and the building itself remained unfinished. However, after some years, in 1956, the government completed the unfinished building and therefore commissioned the remaining sculptures to be displayed in the Palazzo.⁶⁸ Professor Publio Morbiducci spearheaded the project, oversaw the completion, and transfer of the travertine sculptures.⁶⁹ Publio Morbiducci was a well-known and respected Italian sculptor who created one pair of Dioscuri for the Palazzo and was involved in the completion of the Palazzo's programs in the post-War era.⁷⁰ Through Morbiducci's reintroduction of the statues which, as previously stated, were included after the war, the authors of the book include how the building was used during the war. The German army occupied and used the building causing damage suffered by the Palazzo and the surrounding area during the conflict, all of which are not found in other sources.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 229.

⁶⁸ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 205.

⁶⁹ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 205.

⁷⁰ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 205.

⁷¹ Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 205.

Due to the above-outlined elements included in the book *Il Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: Architettura e Costruzione del Colosseo Quadrato*, the source is referenced multiple times in this thesis as it provides a holistic, well-rounded, in-depth overview of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. The language used by the author goes against the pattern that is consistent with other Italian publications. Instead of acknowledging the background of the building while maintaining a formalist approach when analyzing the Palazzo, the authors provide an interesting analysis of the building in the post-War era. The authors conclude that how the building is usually presented and treated demonstrates the lack of evolution Italy has undergone, or not undergone, once the regime dissolved.⁷² The commentary provided is starkly different from even the most contemporary analyses of the building, further proving how important this publication is to the general understanding of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana in both content and sentiment. It is crucial to emphasize that this book is no longer in print, and thus is unavailable to purchase in the contemporary market, which may explain why so many other, more modern publications have not cited the work or included the vital information covered in its chapters.

Carlo Cresti, in his article entitled *Architetti e Architetture dell'Era Fascista*, provides information regarding some of the buildings and architects who worked during Mussolini's control of Italy with a section dedicated to the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. He details the general history of the building and the surrounding *quartiere* of the E42. His work details the people in charge at the time of the creation of the neighborhood and the building. Giuseppe Bottai was the governor of Rome and was involved in the planning of the E42 neighborhood. Vittorio Cini was a senator chosen as to be the acting commissioner for the exposition that would

⁷² Casciato and Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. p. 28 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

have been held in 1942.⁷³ Vittorio Cini suggested that the E42 area should be designed in a specific style in support of the state that would solidify the image of Rome and Fascism as “eternal and universal.”⁷⁴ Cresti mostly details the competition of the Palazzo and the corresponding responses upon the revelation of the winning design and its associated aesthetics. The War and the post-War period are included in his analysis of the building and its associated effects.

When discussing the contemporary implications of the building, Cresti’s position reveals once more the unusual relationship and the attempted alteration in viewer reception that has characterized Italian Fascist buildings. To look at the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana he claims one must “overcome prejudices and free oneself from old canons of interpretation in order to proceed toward the serene reconsideration of a monument whose image is now a recognizable and familiar component of the urban *paesaggio* of Rome and a not insignificant episode in the history of Italian architecture.”⁷⁵ He goes on to express that although the Palazzo is and remains an emblem of Fascism, it is also impossible to deny that it equally represents Rome and the Italian people.⁷⁶ Cresti’s analysis of the reception of the building creates a foundation for other scholars to use in their understanding of how the building is viewed within the society to which it belongs; particularly useful for scholars who are not Italian and who may not be familiar with the impact of the building as a social symbol for the culture and civilization of Italy.

Publications by the Italian Ministry of Culture, although written by various authors, is important to consider since, being part of the government, supplies insight into the building that

⁷³ Cresti, Carlo. *Architetti e Architetture dell’“Era Fascista”*. Firenze. A. Pontecorboli, 2015. p. 149 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

⁷⁴ Cresti. *Architetti e Architetture dell’“Era Fascista”*. p. 150.

⁷⁵ Cresti. *Architetti e Architetture dell’“Era Fascista”*. p. 155.

⁷⁶ Cresti. *Architetti e Architetture dell’“Era Fascista”*. p. 156.

scholarship does not provide. The Ministry publishes books, scholarly articles, and discourses online for people to access and use concerning Rome and its associated monuments. In a publication from 2005, the Ministry of Culture outlined the agreement between the EUR S.p.A CEO Rocco Buttiglione and the Ministry to re-use the Palazzo which had been empty and unused for many years.⁷⁷ In this agreement a rental of the building would be available, it is described as the monument designed to celebrate “Italian excellence in the arts, sciences, and culture.”⁷⁸ No mention of Fascism or Benito Mussolini is present within the report, only a simple acknowledgement to the architects involved in its creation is broached, without any background information, or relation to the regime.⁷⁹ The report also identified that an ideal use for the Palazzo would be a museum, library, offices, or archives. However, in accordance with the EUR S.p.A and the Ministry would lead to alter and restore the building in order to return the building to its previous grandeur.⁸⁰ Buttiglione further asserted that this would mean the beginning of a project that aims to return the monuments back to the general public.⁸¹ The agreement, published by the official ministry of culture in Rome, reflects the lack of recognition that the government includes in reports concerning Mussolini’s Palazzo within the domestic colonization effort.

In a different report published in 2001, the ministry collaborated with well-known, successful Italian intellectuals and the state archives to produce an inventory and profile of Ernesto Lapadula, one of the architects involved in the design of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. The amount of primary documents used and cited are impressive. His involvement in the creation of the Palazzo is outlined and detailed. Paolo Portoghesi, a theorist and historian,

⁷⁷ Ministro per i Beni Culturali Italia: “Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana All’Eur: Firmato l’accordo per Il Rilancio.”, December 1, 2005. <https://www.beniculturali.it/comunicato/Palazzo-della-Civiltà-italiana-all-eur-firmato-l-accordo-per-il-rilancio> [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deepl.

⁷⁸ Ministro per i Beni Culturali Italia: “Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana All’Eur: Firmato l’accordo per Il Rilancio.”

⁷⁹ Ministro per i Beni Culturali Italia: “Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana All’Eur: Firmato l’accordo per Il Rilancio.”

⁸⁰ Ministro per i Beni Culturali Italia: “Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana All’Eur: Firmato l’accordo per Il Rilancio.”

⁸¹ Ministro per i Beni Culturali Italia: “Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana All’Eur: Firmato l’accordo per Il Rilancio.”

who is a professor of architecture at the Sapienza University of Rome provides interesting insight concerning Lapadula. Lapadula, who applied Rationalist visual language in his designs was able to produce one of Rome's most distinctive structures which is "inseparable from its architectural identity."⁸² The publication states that before and during the Fascist control of Italy, Lapadula's success began to rise, and even with the outbreak of the World War, his fame continued. Earning a few teaching positions and honors post-War, he continued to work in and outside of Italy, expanding his influence in Europe and even South America, especially Argentina.⁸³

The publication is a result of numerous partnerships and participation between the government, archival entities, scholars, and the family of the now deceased architect, producing a body of work including original drawings, designs, and personal letters. Although the study, written by scholars Tommaso Dore, Assunta Porciani, Fabio Simonelli and more, is comprehensive and involves many different facets, the article conveniently leaves out certain incriminating evidence that is found in the archives of the states in Rome. Of which includes Lapadula's membership in the Fascist syndicate of architects, an organization aimed to regulate and affirm architects' loyalty to the state in their works, allowing those admitted into the syndicate to participate in architectural competitions and carry out developments for the regime.⁸⁴ His involvement in this syndicate and his projects created for the government are not included. His professional relationship to Mario Romano, an architect whom he collaborated with in the competition of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and in other projects is also not

⁸² Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Lazio, Ministero della Cultura. Tommaso Dore, Assunta Porciani, Fabio Simonelli, Daniela Pesce, e Elisabetta Reale. "Archivio Bruno Ernesto Lapadula Inventario 1923-1965". Roma, 2001. p. 5 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

⁸³ Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Lazio, Ministero della Cultura. "Archivio Bruno Ernesto Lapadula Inventario 1923-1965". p. 6

⁸⁴ Archivio Centrale dello Stato, E42, b.164, 139, fascicolo 719 [Translated by Kiana Camino]

mentioned.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the information provided does provide a well-rounded analysis on his body of work, without necessarily providing context surrounding said body of work. The pattern of leaving out context when viewing buildings, especially those that were built by Fascist architects or for the Fascist regime in Italy, is continuous and is becoming the standard to be followed. The significance and detrimental effect of leaving out context when viewing cannot be emphasized enough.

A book series which includes scholarly articles that the Ministry of Culture collected, edited, and printed entitled *Monumenti di Roma* includes various essays about the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. Marconi discusses in depth the restoration and preservation of the building in the post-War. However, more important to this thesis, is his emphasis on the impact of the architects Cipriano Efisio Oppo and Marcello Piacentini when discussing plans for the E42 neighborhood. Although the winning design of the Palazzo was created by Guerrini, Lapadula, and Romano, the influence of Oppo and Piacentini can be seen via the amendments to the original design.⁸⁶ Oppo although not an architect, was a critic and administrator involved in the visual and political spheres, was one of the people that recognized the potential genius of the architects' design for the project of the Palazzo due to its aesthetics and metaphysical dimensions, recalling the works of Italian artist Giorgio De Chirico who published in Fascist periodicals like *Primato*.⁸⁷ Marconi recalls that the reason why the design is so reminiscent of the artworks that, at the time, were highly visible in the public eye, is due to the fact that Ernesto Lapadula was one of the only architects who was an intimate friend of the painters of Rome during the 1930s.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Casciato, Maristella, and Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano: Federico Motta, 2002. p. 229.

⁸⁶ Marconi, Paolo, "Il Progetto Di Restauro Conservativo del Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana ," in *Monumenti Di Roma*, vol. 2. Viterbo, Roma: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali , 2004. p. 89 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deepl].

⁸⁷ Marconi, Paolo, "Il Progetto Di Restauro Conservativo del Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana ," p. 90.

⁸⁸ Marconi, Paolo, "Il Progetto Di Restauro Conservativo del Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana ," p. 90.

Although some scholars reference the designs' likeness to many sketches by de Chirico, only Marconi discusses the direct relationship between Lapadula, Oppo, and the Roman painters. Lapadula was frequently painted by his artist friends including Giuseppe Capogrossi.⁸⁹ Part of the reason why Lapadula was able to develop and maintain relationships with Roman painters was partly due to the location of his office situated above an infamous bar where many artists, architects, and intellectuals would gather. Marconi states that Lapadula would frequently meet and converse with people such as architects Enrico Del Debbio and Maurizio Sacripanti.⁹⁰ An interesting point that Marconi discusses is the success of the architects who worked for the regime, even after the war, remained prominent figures and were regularly consulted in the creation and adjustment of Roman buildings.⁹¹

When concluding his article, Marconi makes a conflicting statement that proves the discrepancy between past and present receptions of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. He declares that the Palazzo, although the pinnacle expression for Italian culture and pride, is not necessarily exclusively Italian. Marconi claims that instead, the Palazzo is related to and reflects the "European figurative culture than to the Italian one."⁹² This controversial statement directly undermines the very reasoning behind the design and plans of not only the Palazzo but of the entire E42 neighborhood. In multiple documents and articles published by Marconi's contemporaries both abroad and domestically, primary evidence has been given to affirm the motivation behind the project as a testament to Italian culture and its people. The assertion that Marconi makes, however ludicrous, is not a coincidence given the fact that this article would be

⁸⁹ Marconi, Paolo, "Il Progetto Di Restauro Conservativo del Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana ," p. 91.

⁹⁰ Marconi, Paolo, "Il Progetto Di Restauro Conservativo del Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana ," p. 91.

⁹¹ Marconi, Paolo, "Il Progetto Di Restauro Conservativo del Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana ," p. 93.

⁹² Marconi, Paolo, "Il Progetto Di Restauro Conservativo del Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana ," p. 97.

and is included in a publication that the Ministry of Culture printed in the twenty-first century, specifically 2005, for contemporary readers.

Featured in the same book published by the Ministry, a different essay concerning the Palazzo written by Sergio Poretti, the author who wrote the most comprehensive publication about the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana previously discussed in this chapter. His essay in this book is exclusively about the preservation of the architectural structure. He outlines a project proposal that although never materialized, proposed converting the Palazzo into an audiovisual museum. Poretti asserts that this project was a tactic created by institutional organizations to create awareness and raise funding for the preservation of the Palazzo.⁹³ He identifies the reasons behind the need for a proper restoration effort to be conducted due to three actions or, rather, processes that impacted the overall structural integrity of the Palazzo. The first is the use of the building as an office building for twenty years resulting in a change in the interior layout and usual wear and tear from being used daily. The second is due to the long periods of unuse and abandonment, which without proper oversight, resulted in water damage. The third, is that of the natural elements which cause a degradation process to the overall exterior of the building.⁹⁴ All of these processes impacted the integrity of the building and thus required proper restoration and conservation work to restore the Palazzo. Poretti thus outlines the needs of the building and documents how organizations were able to effectively restore the building after a two-phase restoration plan that was carried out in the early twenty-first century.⁹⁵

⁹³ Poretti, Sergio, "Il Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, storia e riuso di un monumento moderno", in *Monumenti Di Roma*, vol. 2. Viterbo, Roma: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali , 2004. p. 86 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deepl].

⁹⁴ Poretti. "Il Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, storia e riuso di un monumento moderno". p. 86

⁹⁵ Poretti. "Il Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, storia e riuso di un monumento moderno". pp. 87, 88.

Although there is vast scholarship surrounding the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana both internationally and domestically, through this literature review it becomes clear that there are discrepancies in both areas of literature. International scholarship is more holistic, citing sources published abroad and in Italy. However, primary sources cited in these foreign publications are few and far between. There are elements left out or only covered superficially in such scholarship. The architects are merely mentioned, without any further background information on their work, the relationship between the group of three, and the influence or connection to the Fascist government are not included in the majority of international scholarship. Similarly, the post-World War II additions of the sculptures, featured in the porticos, included in the final plans of the Palazzo are completely overlooked by all foreign scholars. On the other hand, international scholarship critically analyzes the effects of Fascism on the building and the E42 area. Fascist functions and implications of the building have been eliminated from post-War discourse particularly in Italian publications is mentioned throughout the literature analyzed in this chapter. Italian art historians, while including elements that are omitted in the foreign essays, neglect the bigger picture of the Fascist legacy in Italy, both during and after the conclusion of the Second World War. Italian scholars do not reference the implications of the Fascist monument — thus reflecting the persisting issue that Italy has been avoiding. Italy has not faced its history, and instead overlooks the past. By turning a blind eye to their involvement, the government coordinated with corporations to attempt to depoliticize the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.

3. ER42: Rationalist Architecture and Fascism: An Intertwined Relationship

Mussolini aimed to reimagine Italy for the modern world in the form of the E42 area centered by the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. This chapter discusses the process of creating the architectural structure to represent the epitome of Fascist Italy. Taking advantage of his position and opportunity to develop a new Rome, Mussolini carefully chose the building's design and intended function to reflect the values of the regime. Although the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana references Antiquity and Rationalism, recent cultural amnesia has led to the depoliticized view of the building, ignoring the monument's Fascist roots. Instead of looking at the Palazzo as a *Fascist building*, the Palazzo is viewed as a *building constructed during the Fascist control of Italy*. The separation of the physical edifice from its context eliminates the political and social implications behind the design and commission of the structure. Rationalism, an international movement of architecture popular throughout Europe focused on order, symmetry and prioritized function. Italian Rationalist architecture, which thrived during the golden ages of the Fascist regime, is too often treated as an independent style separate from the political and ideological agenda that Mussolini and his government envisioned for Italy. Rationalism, in the Italian context, was closely tied to Fascism and worked in coordination to solidify a 'new' style to represent the emerging National Fascist Party's Roman empire.

In 1937, the project that Mussolini envisioned for E42 was not just an area but rather an entire ‘model city’ that would stand as a representation for the ideals advocated for by Fascism.⁹⁶ Before Fascist rule, the Italian state was united in theory but not in practice.⁹⁷ As a way to counter the fragmented collective unity of the populace, the E42 area was created to serve as a testament to the universality of Rome, uniting the people under Mussolini and his regime (figures 1 and 2).⁹⁸ Before and during the commission and construction of the E42 project, the Fascist state had been vying for expansion in Ethiopia. The E42 area located outside the historical center corresponded to the imperial agenda in the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa in terms of its layout (figures 3 and 4).⁹⁹ In this context both the new E42 neighborhood and Addis Ababa reflected the empire that Mussolini had been, and continued to build, throughout his rule.¹⁰⁰ The layout in this regard can be seen as imposing. This was compounded by the fact that the E42 *quartiere* would connect the historical center to the port of Ostia, thereby connecting the city to the Mediterranean as in imperial times.¹⁰¹ Given this context, just as Mussolini wanted to colonize the African continent, the E42 project can be interpreted as a domestic colonization effort, creating a model Fascist city at home and abroad. A domestic colony was needed by both the people and the regime. People had not adopted the identity of “Italian”, rather, individuals were loyal to their region, causing discord amongst the populace thus allowing the regime to

⁹⁶ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 244.

⁹⁷ Kallis, Aristotle A *Fascist ideology: Territory and expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922-1945*. London, England: Routledge, 2000. p. 14.

⁹⁸ Kallis, A *Fascist ideology*. p. 30.

⁹⁹ Fuller, Mia. “Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of Eur’42”. *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (1996): 397-418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200949603100209>. p. 409

¹⁰⁰ Loncar, Jelena. “‘F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism’ The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana and Its Shifting Meaning.” Essay In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York , NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 93

¹⁰¹ Fuller, Mia. “Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of Eur’42”. *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (1996): 397-418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200949603100209>. p. 408.

create an area celebrating “Italianness” thereby solidifying a national identity through Fascism.¹⁰² By uniting the people and promoting expansion, Mussolini claimed that a modern Roman Empire would prosper, a Third Rome, thus restoring the previous glory, influence, and power of the city and country.¹⁰³

The E42 area was a project derived to commemorate the anniversary of the government, highlight the achievements of Mussolini’s regime, and present their majesty to the international community by means of a world fair.¹⁰⁴ It was created to celebrate the simultaneous victories of Fascism and Italian culture. E42 marked the twentieth anniversary of the regime’s control of Italy, while also honoring the society and culture of Italians throughout history, present-day, and future.¹⁰⁵ Giuseppe Bottai, who was at one time both the governor of Rome and of Addis Ababa, later the Fascist minister of culture who proposed the exhibition stated “... a universal exhibition will provide a tangible and rightful testimony to the civilizational and revolutionary agency of Roma Littoria [that will be admired] by all people and their heads of state [attending the exhibition].”¹⁰⁶ The world fair would hold an Olympics of Civilization, meant to take place once the neighborhood was finished and inaugurated.¹⁰⁷ The Olympics would consist of competitions however, instead of athletics, the competition would surround all of the elements of human

¹⁰² Etlin, Richard A. “Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture, 1900-1940.” *Studies in the History of Art* 29 (1991): 88–109. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42620260>. p. 92.

¹⁰³ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 244.

¹⁰⁴ Fuller, Mia. “Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of Eur’42”. *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (April 1996): 397-418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200949603100209>. p. 398.

¹⁰⁵ Etlin, Richard A. “Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture, 1900-1940.” *Studies in the History of Art* 29 (1991): 88–109. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42620260>. p. 105.

¹⁰⁶ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 245.

¹⁰⁷ Notaro, Anna. “Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR).” *GeoJournal* 51, no. 1/2 (2000): 15–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41147493>. p. 17.

activity in the form of culture.¹⁰⁸ Culture, understood as science, music, literature, art, fashion, and invention, would be represented in these games. The world fair would serve as a propaganda machine for the Fascist state via material and spatial design both served as a model for other regimes to follow. However, construction of the area ceased upon Italy's involvement in the Second World War, thus the World Fair was never held.¹⁰⁹

Although the E42 manifests the ideals of Fascism, the project was also a means to compete with Germany. Since the National Socialist administration of Germany hosted and emerged victorious in the Berlin Olympics of 1936, the Italian Fascist government used the term 'Olympics' to challenge their German neighbors.¹¹⁰ In addition, in making the competition solely based on culture, the Italians would have been able to display their historical influence and confirm their contemporary cultural dominance.¹¹¹ This rivalry was not limited to simple sports or cultural standards, rather this seemingly innocuous display implicated which system of government is most successful.¹¹² By creating the Olympics of Civilization, constructing an entire area in the government style, and embodying colonial expansionist agendas, the government affirmed their position as the superior ideological and political system complimenting the German Fascist counterpart. Italy in this regard, asserted their cultural power over Germany and the world, complimenting Germany's military power.

¹⁰⁸ Fuller, Mia. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of Eur'42". *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (April 1996): 397-418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200949603100209>. p. 399.

¹⁰⁹ Fuller, Mia. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of Eur'42". *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (April 1996): 397-418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200949603100209>. p. 399.

¹¹⁰ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 246.

¹¹¹ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*. p. 257.

¹¹² Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*. p. 257.

Since the E42 neighborhood consisted of multiple projects such as structures, piazzas, and buildings, the Fascist regime would hold open competitions for architects.¹¹³ Architects in this regard would submit designs to a selected committee who would then award prizes to the top designs and its respective creators. The commission for the E42 consisted of five architects, Marcello Piacentini, Giuseppe Pagano, Giovanni Michelucci, Piero Portaluppi, and Giuseppe Caffarelli. These competitions were each distinct in terms of the stipulations and requirements for individual submissions.¹¹⁴ However, to participate in such contests, the architects in question had to be related to the regime in some capacity by becoming members of the semi-professional organization Fascist Syndicate of Art and Artists.¹¹⁵

Mussolini's administration frequently held these contests for new developments in the city, a practice modeled after artistic institutions such as the Accademia di San Luca, to boost participation and support for the arts sponsored by the regime. All of the projects in E42 would be more competitive since the architecture featured included in the E42 *quartiere* would have a unique trademark Fascist style.¹¹⁶ In other words, the aesthetics chosen for the E42 should reflect the essence of Fascism. Mussolini himself stated "We must not remain solely contemplatives. We must create a new heritage to place alongside that of antiquity. We must create a new art, an art of our times: a Fascist art."¹¹⁷ *Stile Littorio* is employed in most, if not all, of the buildings created during the late 1930's.¹¹⁸ However, the aforementioned term used to describe the

¹¹³ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*. pp. 250, 253.

¹¹⁴ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*. p. 250

¹¹⁵ Stone, Marla. "The State as Patron: Making Official Culture in Fascist Italy." In *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy*, edited by Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff, 205–38. Princeton University Press, 1997. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv24rgbsj.12>. p. 212.

¹¹⁶ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 250.

¹¹⁷ Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." Essay. In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 93.

¹¹⁸ Mras, George P. "Italian Fascist Architecture: Theory and Image." *Art Journal* 21, no. 1 (1961): 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/774290>. pp. 10.

buildings designed for the regime is controversial. Rationalism is an international architectural movement favored during the Fascist control of Italy. Although a global style, how Rationalism was adopted in Italy displayed many stylistic and ideological similarities to the government.¹¹⁹ Due to these parallels some scholars have gone as far to say *Stile Littorio*, or state style of art and architecture, is just another form of Rationalism.¹²⁰ Although not all Italian Rationalists were Fascists and vice versa, the conceptual models that Italian Rationalism demanded were very close to those required by Mussolini's administration.¹²¹

Rationalism can be defined as a movement of architecture that pertained to the avant-garde, strongly against traditional forms of buildings and instead advocated for a synonymous aesthetic that integrated form and function.¹²² According to Richard Etlin, national identity played a major role in the development and success of Italian Rationalism.¹²³ Taking ideas such as urbanism and Italian identity from the previous artistic and architectural movement of the *Novecento*, which originated in Milan after the conclusion of the First World War, the emerging Rationalist architects known as the Gruppo 7, created a manifesto sparking the development of Italian Rationalism.¹²⁴ Rationalism is distinguished by how the style negotiated Historicism, which recalled motifs and designs from the past, and Eclecticism, a movement that combined various historical elements from different cultures to create its own unique aesthetic.¹²⁵ The

¹¹⁹ Ghirardo, Diane Yvonne. "Italian Architect and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist's Role in Regime Building." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39, no. 2 (1980): <https://doi.org/10.2307/989580> p. 109.

¹²⁰ Ghirardo, "Italian Architect and Fascist Politics:" p. 119.

¹²¹ Ghirardo, "Italian Architect and Fascist Politics:" p. 109.

¹²² Etlin, Richard A. "Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture, 1900-1940." *Studies in the History of Art* 29 (1991): 88–109. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42620260>. p. 99.

¹²³ Etlin. "Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture". p. 89.

¹²⁴ Etlin. "Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture". pp. 95, 96, 97.

¹²⁵ Cheng, Kaiyu, and Paulina Neisch. "A New Perspective on Eclectic Attributes in Architecture: Taking Eclectic Architecture in Beijing and Hong Kong as an Example." *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering* 22, no. 3 (2023): 1126–45. doi:10.1080/13467581.2022.2074017; Hvattum, Mari. "Historicism." *Oxford Bibliographies*, February 2020. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780190922467/obo-9780190922467-0032.xml?rskey=Z9Pe1j&result=1&q=eclecticism+architecture#firstMatch>.

group composed of Luigi Figini, Guido Frette, Sebastiano Larco, Gino Pollini, Carlo Enrico Rava, Giuseppe Terragni, and Adalberto Libera, aimed to create a style that merged function and form, focused on order and sequences, reflected the civilization in a way that was unique to Italy and the Italian people.¹²⁶ Although Etlin states that the group, in all four of their manifestos, did not explicitly reference Fascism enough to merit mention, that did not stop the Rationalists from drawing upon various Fascist ideologies including nationalism to strengthen their artistic hold in the ever growing fascist political environment.¹²⁷

The Rationalists and the Fascists held parallel aesthetic values that could be viewed as compatible in terms of their goals. The Rationalists, in fact, in their manifesto published in 1926 stated “between past and present there is no compatibility. We do not want to break with tradition...”¹²⁸ Interestingly, as previously stated, the design that the Fascist government chose to represent the regime had to consist of past and present elements in a synthesis that stood for the ideals advocated for by Mussolini.¹²⁹ That same year in a speech made by *Il Duce* he expressed that the style of the government should be “traditionalist and at the same time modern”.¹³⁰ The similarities, then, of these two architectural styles and their intentions deserves notice. The first tangible moment in which the Rationalists began to draw a parallel with the Fascists is the first exposition of Rationalist architecture in Rome in 1928, which emphasized order, classicism, and modernism. This exhibition was coordinated by the National Fascist Syndicate of Architects and

¹²⁶ Mras, George P. “Italian Fascist Architecture: Theory and Image.” *Art Journal* 21, no. 1 (1961): 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/774290>. p. 10.

¹²⁷ Etlin, Richard A. “Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture, 1900-1940.” *Studies in the History of Art* 29 (1991): 88–109. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42620260>. p. 103.

¹²⁸ Mras, George P. “Italian Fascist Architecture: Theory and Image.” *Art Journal* 21, no. 1 (1961): 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/774290>. p. 10.

¹²⁹ Ghirardo, Diane Yvonne. “Italian Architect and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist’s Role in Regime Building.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39, no. 2 (1980): <https://doi.org/10.2307/989580> p. 115.

¹³⁰ Mras, George P. “Italian Fascist Architecture: Theory and Image.” *Art Journal* 21, no. 1 (1961): 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/774290>. p. 11.

Artists.¹³¹ However it was not until the second exhibition of Rationalist architecture in Rome in 1931 that the Rationalists began to work with and for Mussolini and the Fascist regime.¹³²

Although no definitive organization or movement was named as the creators of *Stile Littorio* it is crucial to note that many Rationalist architects were given the opportunities to create buildings and structures for the Fascist cause in Rome (figure 5).¹³³

Italian Rationalism was formally proposed to Mussolini in 1931 to become the official architectural style used by the Fascist regime.¹³⁴ The Rationalists believed that their architectural modernism justly reflected Italian identity and the Fascist agenda. Italian adamant in referring to tradition while being absolutely modern, which coordinated with Mussolini's ideals of *romanità* or revival of key Roman symbols, technique, images, and decorations, but through their creations, erected edifices that asserted power, Italian prestige, and iconic elements; all of which the regime desired for their people and for the world to acknowledge.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, the proposal for Rationalism to become the state-approved style was never formally accepted because Mussolini wished to create a distinct style that solved the conflict existing between the modernist Rationalist movement and the traditional style.¹³⁶ The approach, which Mussolini took when it came to architecture mimicked his political agenda. Kallis describes in depth that Italian Fascism did not intend to follow an existing political structure, and in this manner, Mussolini

¹³¹ Etlin, Richard A. "Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture, 1900-1940." *Studies in the History of Art* 29 (1991): 88–109. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42620260>. p. 103.

¹³² Etlin. "Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture". p. 105.

¹³³ Etlin. "Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture". p. 105.

¹³⁴ Kallis, Aristotle. "Futures Made Present: Architecture, Monument, and the Battle for the 'Third Way' in Fascist Italy", *Fascism* 7, 1 (2018): 45-79, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00701004>. p. 47.

¹³⁵ Etlin, Richard A. "Nationalism in Modern Italian Architecture, 1900-1940." *Studies in the History of Art* 29 (1991): 88–109. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42620260>. p. 105.

¹³⁶ Kallis, Aristotle. "Futures Made Present: Architecture, Monument, and the Battle for the 'Third Way' in Fascist Italy", *Fascism* 7, 1 (2018): 45-79, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00701004>. p. 50.

wanted to create a ‘Third Rome’ and a ‘Third Way’ that satisfied his needs without indebting his ideas to previously existing positions.¹³⁷

Stile Littorio, is the product of Italian Rationalism and Fascism. Although the Stile Littorio, as previously stated, did not officially claim Rationalism, many ideals and aesthetic principles of the Italian Rationalists were included in the overall aim of the Fascist Stile Littorio.¹³⁸ However, the person who was able to effectively marry the ideals of Rationalism, traditionalism, and the vision of fascism, was Marcello Piacentini, the architect behind many government projects.¹³⁹ Piacentini sought to create a timeless and comprehensive style that effectively married the past, present, and future of Italian culture and strength. According to scholar Diane Yvonne Ghirardo, Rationalism and Fascism mirrored one another in dynamic and extreme support of innovation.¹⁴⁰ The need to compare these separate but coinciding movements is necessary due to the commonalities shared between these architectural phenomena. However, when analyzing buildings and designs created during Mussolini’s control, the analysis between Rationalism and Fascism is overlooked in scholarship.¹⁴¹ Architects who considered and labeled themselves as Italian Rationalists, at times, created their Rationalist works in support of the Fascist movement.¹⁴² The most pertinent example to this thesis is the membership of the committee in charge of the creation and construction of the E42 area. The commission consisted of five architects, Marcello Piacentini, Guiseppe Pagano, Giovanni Michelucci, Piero Portaluppi,

¹³⁷ Kallis. “Futures Made Present”. pp. 45, 51, 53.

¹³⁸ Kallis. “Futures Made Present”. p. 45.

¹³⁹ Kallis. “Futures Made Present”. p. 45

¹⁴⁰ Ghirardo, Diane Yvonne. “Italian Architect and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist’s Role in Regime Building.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39, no. 2 (1980): <https://doi.org/10.2307/989580> pp. 114, 115.

¹⁴¹ Ghirardo. “Italian Architects and Fascist Politics:” pp. 109, 110.

¹⁴² Ghirardo. “Italian Architects and Fascist Politics:” p. 109.

and Giuseppe Caffarelli, of whom four at some point in their careers were self-proclaimed Rationalists.¹⁴³

The centerpiece of the regime's project was the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, which would host the Exhibition of Italian Civilization before becoming a museum in honor of Italianism and progress (figure 6).¹⁴⁴ Since the E42 was meant to be seen as the solidification of a new Roman empire, the architecture within this area but especially the crown jewel had to epitomize the qualities and values advocated for by the Fascist government (figure 7). As previously stated, *concorsi*, or competitions, for projects involved in E42 were more competitive and restrictive, however, the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana competition was even more prestigious.¹⁴⁵ The guidelines for the Palazzo were not specific in terms of mandatory dimensions or characteristics included in the design, but rather, the stipulations were based on vision and creativity (figure 8).¹⁴⁶ In fact the original document, written in Italian, French, English, and German states:

The prospectus also pointed out that it was even more essential in this competition than in the others that the foundation of the architectural inspiration should be that classical, monument sentiment... expressed in the most modern, functional forms. Given the absolute liberty and ideation left to competitors and the necessarily monumental and grandiose character of this exceptional construction the regulation prescribed no limits on height or bulk...¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Ghirardo. "Italian Architects and Fascist Politics:" p. 110.

¹⁴⁴ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism' The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana and Its Shifting Meaning." Essay In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York , NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 94.

¹⁴⁵ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 253.

¹⁴⁶ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*. p. 254.

¹⁴⁷ *Concorso per il Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana* [Competition for the Palace of the Italian Civilizations] 1938. ArchiDiAP <https://archidiap.com/opera/palazzo-della-civiltà-italiana/>. The committee was composed by: C. E. Oppo, M. Piacenti, A. De Francisci, F. Michelucci, G. Pagano, P. Portaluppi, G. Caffarelli.

The grandeur and consequence of the Palazzo was further affirmed by the fact that some members of the selection committee, including Cipriano Efisio Oppo, Marcello Piacentini, and Giuseppe Pagano decided to participate in the competition alongside other applicants.¹⁴⁸

The guidelines surrounding the Palazzo's design itself were focused on fusing the ideas of antiquity with the modern cutting-edge ideals of Fascism and Rationalist architecture. Specifically, the monumentalism of the regime and Rome's classical past needed to be present in the aesthetics of the Palazzo (figures 9, 10, 11).¹⁴⁹ The architectural structure of the building aimed to be a physical manifestation of the attitudes of all artistic expressions that have and continue to be a part of the Italian identity, in function, form, and artful conception. The concorso for the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana did not specify the shape or the dimensions of the building, meaning that the participants had more creative freedom in fulfilling the space than in previous competitions.¹⁵⁰ In fact, the only definitive regulation that was included in the project was the use of 'autarchic' materials as opposed to those that had to be imported.¹⁵¹ The use of local stone and marble along with other domestic Italo-Roman materials were meant to further support the notion of Italian identity and national pride creating a structure that united Italy in both socio-cultural principles and materiality.

The total number of applications submitted to the *concorso* totaled fifty-three, however, the winning design was created by Rationalist architects Giovanni Guerrini, Ernesto Lapadula, and Mario Romano.¹⁵² They were members of the Fascist party and of the *Sindacato Azionale Fascista Architetti*, the professional organization of Fascist architects (figures 12, 13,

¹⁴⁸ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*. p. 253.

¹⁴⁹ Cresti, Carlo. *Architetti e architetture dell'era fascista*. Firenze, Italia: A. Pontecorboli, 2015. p. 150 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

¹⁵⁰ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 254.

¹⁵¹ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*. p. 254.

¹⁵² Archivio Centrale dello Stato, E42, b.146, 133, fascicolo 719 [Translated by Kiana Camino].

14).¹⁵³ The semi-professional organization was tasked to assure that those who belonged to the group executed their job as architects with the intention of expressing Italian values, advocated for by the state.¹⁵⁴ This association was one of many syndicates created by the Fascist regime between 1925 and 1930 to promote ideas and elevate the fields of art and creative projects into professional and lucrative disciplines.¹⁵⁵ How Mussolini's government was able to elevate these fields of work was by promoting those who already worked to join these syndicates. Upon their inscription, members could participate in a number of competitions and exhibitions that awarded prize money to winning designs and plans.¹⁵⁶ In this way the Fascist syndicates served two functions, first by advocating artists, architects, people from artistic educations and industries, to join the syndicates allowing them to compete with one another for prize money while simultaneously providing the state with cutting edge projects that reflected the wants and needs of the state through stipulations and regulations of said competitions.¹⁵⁷ In fact the success of the Fascist associations' efforts were so great that within the first ten years of its establishment, government-sponsored competitions of art and design prize money increased from 7,5000 lire to 153,350 lire.¹⁵⁸ The amount of growth is over twenty times the original amount, in contemporary monetary scales the equivalent would be from 7,037 euros to 142,578 euros. The Fascist syndicates, therefore, were crucial engines of creative and political force. Through these associations artists and Fascist ideals alike were cemented into monuments that would withstand the test of time.

¹⁵³ Archivio Centrale dello Stato, E42, b.146, 133, fascicolo 719 [Translated by Kiana Camino].

¹⁵⁴ Stone, Marla. "The State as Patron: Making Official Culture in Fascist Italy." In *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy*, edited by Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff, 205–38. Princeton University Press, 1997. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv24rgbsj.12>. p. 211.

¹⁵⁵ Stone. "The State as Patron:" p. 211.

¹⁵⁶ Stone. "The State as Patron:" pp. 211, 212.

¹⁵⁷ Stone. "The State as Patron:" p. 212.

¹⁵⁸ Stone. "The State as Patron:" p. 213.

The design of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana reflects the consolidation of the past and current state that exemplify Rome in the ideal version of *romanità*.¹⁵⁹ *Romanità* was the process of reviving of key Roman symbols, technique, images, and decorations. Linking Fascism's present to Rome's imperial history, *romanità* united the people under one identity, and thus played a critical role in the projects of the Fascist regime, including the E42 area and the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.¹⁶⁰ Scholar Romke Visser discusses the importance of *romanità* in the Fascist control of Italy. Italian scholars Luciano Anfora and Mariella Cagnetta agree with Visser when discussing how the idea of *romanità* influenced the types and modes of government propaganda during the twentieth century.¹⁶¹ However, Visser points out that most of the scholarship available deals with *romanità* as just a tool for rhetorical propaganda. Most publications concerning *romanità* does not emphasize how the use of this idea effectively built an image that was supported by the entire populace, including the elite and popular members of Italian society.¹⁶² As seen in the previous chapter of this thesis, the according literature on Fascism in Italy only relates to scholarship written and read by a select few. How the legacy of Fascism was and is dealt with today occurs differently according to educational, cultural, capital, and social levels of awareness. Hence, it is pertinent to understand that *romanità* is one of the few elements that was used in building an image for every man in Italy.¹⁶³

Romanità in this regard must be understood as a successful device to make each member of society an equal contributor to the everlasting glory of Italianness.¹⁶⁴ Mussolini and

¹⁵⁹ Notaro, Anna. "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)." *GeoJournal* 51, no. 1/2 (2000): 15–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41147493>. p. 15.

¹⁶⁰ Casciato, Maristella, e Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano, Italia: Federico Motta Editore, 2002. p. 207 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

¹⁶¹ Visser, Romke. "Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the Romanita." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1992, pp. 5-22. p. 5.

¹⁶² Visser. "Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the Romanita." p. 17.

¹⁶³ Visser. "Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the Romanita." p. 12.

¹⁶⁴ Visser. "Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the Romanita." p. 7.

his Fascist government were able to use this concept to consolidate society in favor of Fascism through the application of the idea via spacial, rhetorical, artistic, and symbolic avenues.¹⁶⁵ Traditional 'Roman' elements were incorporated into the basis and reasonings of Fascist efforts thereby hiding their reasonings behind important socio-cultural conventions. By taking history and applying it to the present linking it as a continuation of the legacy of Rome and Italy, the Fascist government was able to create an idea of a united populace that through propaganda was accomplished.¹⁶⁶ Visser states that through this process the government and the people both "passionately dreamt its Roman dreams realized in Fascism".¹⁶⁷ Using history, Mussolini and his government proved their presence necessary to continue the legacy and glory of Italy.

Mussolini, during the 1930s began to associate himself as the new Augustus (figure 15). By taking on the role as the new emperor Augustus, Mussolini was pushing the regime's agenda of reviving the idea of *romanità*. As such, he needed an edifice like the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana to commemorate his power and authority. Using ancient references in a modern interpretation, Mussolini effectively reminded the people of their glorified past while simultaneously reaffirming Fascism as the necessary instrument to return to an age of grandeur and assure Fascism's position of control.

Other distinguishing features of the Palazzo establish this structure as a continuation of *romanità* as advocated by the Fascist regime. A prominent quote by Mussolini in his speech announcing the conquest of Ethiopia, which began the rise of Il Duce's new Roman Empire crowns the building "*Un popolo di poeti, di artisti, di eroi, di santi, di pensatori, di scienziati, di*

¹⁶⁵ Marconi, Paolo. "Il progetto di restauro conservativo del Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana." Essay in *Monumenti di Roma*, vol. 2. Roma, Italia: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Viterbo, 2005. p. 91 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

¹⁶⁶ Cresti, Carlo. *Architetti e architetture dell'era fascista*. Firenze, Italia: A. Pontecorboli, 2015. p. 150 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

¹⁶⁷ Visser, Romke. "Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the Romanita." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1992, pp. 5-22. p. 11.

navigatori, di trasmigratori ”.¹⁶⁸ The quote, translating to “ A people of poets, of artists, of heroes, of saints, of philosophers, of scientists, of navigators, of transmigrators” references the great contributions of Italian figures in a variety of fields, solidifies the building’s functional purpose as a manifestation of Italian superiority and Fascist propaganda (figure 16). The quote was carefully decided as it validates the E42 area as a domestic model both at home and on the world stage, while also highlighting the cultural contributions that Italians have and will continue to make in the present and future.

The aesthetic qualities of the building must be analyzed applying the context of the *romanità* into consideration. The winning design proved to be extremely controversial among modernist and Rationalist architects, who claimed that the aesthetic plan of the Palazzo was exceedingly determined by the use of arches (figures 17, 18).¹⁶⁹ Critics viewed the repetition of the arch design as an imitation of the Roman Colosseo. The overall design, dependent on a singular element, was deemed unfit to highlight the modern and contemporary goals that the innovative Fascist state had for Rome.¹⁷⁰ However, in the original documents submitted by the winning architects, the use of the arch is explained. The arches are meant to symbolize the eternal, universal nature of the arch, which has been a part of Italian civilization since the first Roman epoch.¹⁷¹

The original plan submitted to the council was altered in various ways in order to better fit the vision that Mussolini had for the crown jewel of the E42 project. The initial grid plan for the arches on the building were 13 x 8 meters, however, this was later amended to 9 x 6

¹⁶⁸ Casciato, Poretti. “*Il Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*” p. 93 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

¹⁶⁹ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 255.

¹⁷⁰ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome*. p. 255.

¹⁷¹ Archivio Centrale dello Stato, E42, b.146, 133, fascicolo 719, 3.

meters (figures 19, 20).¹⁷² There were two reasons behind the reduction in the number and scale of the arches. One was to make the arches themselves more precise and detailed. Second, this layout doubled as a symbolic tribute to Benito Mussolini whose name has the same letters as the updated dimensions.¹⁷³ Following Jelena Loncar, the revised dimensions were chosen for aesthetic and symbolic purposes.

Lapadula, Guerrini, and Romano's design, as previously stated, was predominantly characterized by the incorporation of the arch, however the arches were purely for aesthetic reasons and served no functional purpose, structurally speaking.¹⁷⁴ This critique was compounded by Piacentini's alteration to the structural plans. Instead of using the arches to reinforce the weight of the building, which would be constructed of travertine instead of the originally proposed stone, the arches were meant to distract from a reinforced concrete structure made of beams, pillars, and slabs that fortify and counterbalance the Palazzo.¹⁷⁵ In the final, committee-approved design, 216 arches are represented, 54 arches on each of its four sides.¹⁷⁶ Contemporary architectural scholars, like Sergio Poretti, celebrate the focus on Roman elements of the first prize composition and even negates the fact that the arches are purely aesthetic.¹⁷⁷ Rather, he argues that they are a skeletal system of support. He asserts that this unique skeletal

¹⁷² Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 256.

¹⁷³ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism' The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana and Its Shifting Meaning." Essay In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York , NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 96.

¹⁷⁴ Loncar. "'F is For...Fluctuating Symbolism'". p. 95.

¹⁷⁵ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 256.

¹⁷⁶ Notaro, Anna. "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)." *GeoJournal* 51, no. 1/2 (2000): 15–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41147493>. p. 17.

¹⁷⁷ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism' The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana and Its Shifting Meaning." Essay In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York , NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 94.

construction was used throughout the E42 project to effectively create monumental designs of Rome using more modern materials that emphasize the eternal continuation.¹⁷⁸

The hollow, cubic, illusive aesthetics of the Palazzo recall Giorgio de Chirico's metaphysical paintings, and as such, this building has been branded by scholars as a metaphysical edifice. De Chirico's paintings incorporated reduced, almost minimalized themes from antiquity to create scenes with dream-like, eerie characteristics (figure 21).¹⁷⁹ His paintings were met with success in Italy and internationally in the 1920s, and thus, executives involved in the E42, particularly Cipriano Efisio Oppo, were familiar with his works.¹⁸⁰ Although many international scholars discuss the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and de Chirico's painted palazzos, only one Italian source discusses the significance behind this association. Although most people recognize the influence of Piacentini during the construction of the E42 area, it was Oppo at the time of the Palazzo's creation, who was more influential politically due to his close, long-standing association to the Fascist regime and his position as secretary of the National Fascist Syndicate of Arts.¹⁸¹ Oppo, in this regard, was one of the leading influences in the alterations and amendments of the winning design for the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.¹⁸² Paolo Marconi notes that Oppo was well acquainted and even impressed by de Chirico and his contemporaries, as he was involved in the Third Roman Quadriennale where the painter and his peers participated.¹⁸³ Therefore, it is no surprise that Oppo, being the deciding factor in the additions made to the

¹⁷⁸ Poretti, Sergio. *Modernismi Italiani: Architettura e costruzione nel Novecento*. Rome, Italia: Gangemi, 2008. p. 13 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

¹⁷⁹ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism' The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana and Its Shifting Meaning." Essay In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 99.

¹⁸⁰ Marconi, Paolo. "Il progetto di restauro conservativo del Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana." Essay in *Monumenti di Roma*, vol. 2. Roma, Italia: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Viterbo, 2005. p. 90 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

¹⁸¹ Marconi. "Il progetto di restauro conservativo del Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana" p. 89.

¹⁸² Marconi. "Il progetto di restauro conservativo del Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana" p. 89.

¹⁸³ Marconi. "Il progetto di restauro conservativo del Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana" p. 90.

original design, was inspired by the artist and modelled similar alterations after the artist's paintings.

De Chirico's impact on the design of the Palazzo was compounded by the fact that Ernesto Lapadula, the lead architect of the winning sketch, was a close friend of the Roman artists of the 1930s including the metaphysical painter.¹⁸⁴ It is important to note that although both Oppo and Piacentini were influential in different ways, Lapadula, before winning the competition for the Palazzo, worked as an assistant for Piacentini.¹⁸⁵ During this time, Lapadula frequented a cafe bar called Caffé Rosati on piazza del Popolo, where artists and architects would sit, drink, and discuss ideas.¹⁸⁶ Lapadula spent time with de Chirico before his trip to America in 1937.¹⁸⁷ There are many portraits of Lapadula by modernist artists like Giuseppe Capogrossi, that attest to the architect's relationship with Roman painters of the 1930s.¹⁸⁸ The iconic, repetitive arches, clean, stark lines, and emptiness that characterize the Palazzo, are featured in multiple de Chirico's works such as *Natura morta: Torino a primavera*, 1914; *Mistero e malinconia di una strada*, 1914; and especially the many, widely distributed versions of *Piazza d'Italia* (figures 22, 23, 24).¹⁸⁹ Due to these elements, it is no surprise that Oppo, Lapadula, and Piacentini by association, were shaped by de Chirico's works when finalizing the plans for the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.

The sculptures present today in the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana are elements that were added during the construction and completion of the building.¹⁹⁰ While the Fascist

¹⁸⁴ Marconi. "Il progetto di restauro conservativo del Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana" p. 229.

¹⁸⁵ Casciato, Maristella, e Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano, Italia: Federico Motta Editore, 2002. p. 229 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

¹⁸⁶ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 229.

¹⁸⁷ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 91.

¹⁸⁸ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 91.

¹⁸⁹ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 90.

¹⁹⁰ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 90.

sculptures in the porticos of the Palazzo which reference Mussolini's quote on the side of the building are a design amendment, the *Dioscuri* on both sides of the building were present in the original plans (figure 24).¹⁹¹ The *Dioscuri* serve to signify that the Palazzo was the spiritual and cultural center of the E42 area and of Mussolini's Rome. The *Dioscuri* are modelled after sculptures that would have been placed at the entrance of Ancient Roman temples.¹⁹² These twins had a mythic significance in the cult of Rome.¹⁹³ Similarly, it could be inferred that these *Dioscuri* reference the foundation myth of Rome and its respective set of twins, Romulus and Remus. The *Dioscuri*, in the context of its placement in the Palazzo, affirm this building as a spiritual center for Italian prestige and Fascist authority while maintaining a connection to the original twins who founded Rome. In the renderings submitted to the competition, only the *Dioscuri* were included, however, sometime during the construction of the building, the committee decided to incorporate sculptures that attested to the 'civilization' of Italy.¹⁹⁴ In the preliminary drawing, only one pair of two *Dioscuri* sculptures were to be placed at the corners of the Palazzo.¹⁹⁵ The position and dimensions of the sculptures changed various times before finally being finalized. In the completed work, four *Dioscuri* are present in the Palazzo, one set for the main façade, and another set for the back façade.¹⁹⁶ These sculptures were created by two artists. The set to be placed at the front was given to Publio Morbiducci, who had amassed a

¹⁹¹ Casciato, Poretti. "*Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*" p. 90.

¹⁹² Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism' The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana and Its Shifting Meaning." Essay In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York , NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 94. ; Casciato, Maristella, e Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano, Italia: Federico Motta Editore, 2002. p. 92.

¹⁹³The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Dioscuri". Encyclopaedia Britannica, February 29, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Dioscuri>.

¹⁹⁴Casciato, Maristella, e Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano, Italia: Federico Motta Editore, 2002. p. 90 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

¹⁹⁵ Archidiap, Concorso per il Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, Guerrini, La Padula, Romano, pp. 851, 852.

¹⁹⁶ Casciato, Maristella, e Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano, Italia: Federico Motta Editore, 2002. p. 90 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

reputation and had worked on other projects for the regime.¹⁹⁷ The pair intended for the back façade was completed by Alberto Felci.¹⁹⁸

The Carrara marble sculptural additions under the porticos of the Palazzo symbolize various elements and contributions of Italian civilization. Oppo and Lapadula, familiar with de Chirico's metaphysical paintings, included these statues, and wanted them displayed underneath certain porticos, nonetheless, until the outbreak of the Second World War a back and forth ensued as to where they should be displayed.¹⁹⁹ Although thirty statues were to be planned to be created in honor of civilization, only twenty eight are currently standing in the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.²⁰⁰ Oppo decided that all of the allegorical figures should be created by various artists from different regions of Italy to further the idea of a unified, universal building demonstrating the greatness of Italy and its people (figures 26, 27, 28, 29).²⁰¹ These marble representatives include great strength but intellectually and physically such as: Angelo Biancini's *The Virtue of Military*; and *The Primacy of Navigation*; Cermelo Abate's *The Genius of Poetry*; Umberto Baglioni's *The Genius of Politics*; Bibolotti Pietro's *The Genius of Theatre*, and *Military Genius*; Marcello Macherini's *Genius of Theatre*; Giorgi Salvi's *The Genius Inventor*; representatives of areas of study such as: Tommaso Bertolino's *Astronomy*; Bibolotti Pietro's *Mathematics*; Guido Calori's *Physics*; Volterrano Volterrani's *Chemistry*; Giorgio Giordani's *Medicine*; Guido Galletti's *Geography*; Antonio Biggi's *Natural Science*; Giuseppe Tonnini's *Mathematics*; Michele Guerrisi's *Philosophy*; representative of the arts such as: Angelo Biancini's *Painting*; Antonio Biggi's *Architecture*; Marcello Macherini's *Archeology*;

¹⁹⁷ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 90.

¹⁹⁸ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 90.

¹⁹⁹ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 92.

²⁰⁰ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 90.

²⁰¹ Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" p. 90.

Luigi Venturini's *Music*; representatives corresponding to elements of society: Riccardo Assenti's *The Story*; Aroldo Bellini's *The Social Order*; Benedetto de Lisi's *Labor*; Fortunato Longo's *The Law*; Napoleone Martinuzzi's *Heroism*; Mario Montecceconi's *Agriculture*; Giovanni Nicolini's *Industry*; Luciano Minguzzi's *Craftmanship*; and Mirko Vucetich's *Commerce*.²⁰² These statues serve a dual purpose as they represent ideals and contributions that Italians have made throughout history, further imposing the concepts of greatness, endurance, and advancement for Italian culture through the Fascist regime.

The structure stands on the highest point of the E42 area, further highlighting the status of the Palazzo as the epicenter of Mussolini's project.²⁰³ The Urban plan placed the Palazzo strategically at the focal point. Intersections with other monuments are situated vertical to the structure itself, the Palazzo is the last and highest monument crowning the area. Inside, the Mostra della Civiltà Italiana would have exhibited "...how without the military, political, and spiritual achievements of this ancient and yet miraculously young people [Italians], Europe would not exist, and the world would be much less civilized".²⁰⁴ The building, in this regard, is the pinnacle monument in honor of the contributions made historically by Romans and, most importantly, those made by the Fascist regime.

As previously stated, the war interrupted the completion of the Palazzo structure itself as well as the decorative elements. In fact, the completion and installation of the statues was not done until 1956, more than ten years after the conclusion of the Second World War.²⁰⁵ The

²⁰² Casciato, Poretti. "Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato" pp. 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225.

²⁰³ Kallis, Aristotle A. *The Third Rome, 1922-43: The making of the fascist capital*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. p. 253.

²⁰⁴ Notaro, Anna. "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)." *GeoJournal* 51, no. 1/2 (2000): 15–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41147493>. p. 19.

²⁰⁵ Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." Essay. In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 82.

significance of this fact cannot be understated. Years after the dissolution of Fascist control, the government, scholars, architects, and cultural institutions worked together to complete Mussolini's Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.²⁰⁶ This begs the question as to how and why these Fascist icons in the post-War are never treated as purely Fascist, but stood as symbols for the people of Italy, regardless of the association to the regime.

Although the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana was never used for its intended function, post-World War II dialogues involving the E42 area and specifically the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana are skewed. Instead of providing a holistic approach, considering both the design and the context, Italian scholars, government officials, and executives have separated the building and the conditions in which it was fabricated. The separation of these interconnected and mutually dependent factors critically alters the understanding of the building and its functions. The Fascist vision for the Palazzo was completed and realized years after the dissolution of the regime. This fact begs the question as to how and why this was done without backlash and continues to be overlooked. Instead of being proactive by informing audiences of the circumstances surrounding the creation of this edifice, key elements are largely ignored or only superficially presented. By viewing the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana as an architectural structure *created during Fascism* as opposed to a *Fascist building*, the narrative and legitimacy of history can and is misconstrued – thus allowing false discourses to be constructed in an attempt to cover up the unpleasant realities of history, distorting the truth, and subjecting the future generations to deceptions surrounding the world they live in.

²⁰⁶ Casciato, Maristella, e Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano, Italia: Federico Motta Editore, 2002. pp. 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95.

4. Fendi and the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: Fascism and Consumerism

In 2015 the fashion house Fendi Roma signed a contract to rent the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana for fifteen years.²⁰⁷ Prior to Fendi's rental, the building was left unattended by the government since the funds needed to continue upkeep was prioritized to other monuments under the government's care.²⁰⁸ The way that the Italian government mitigated Fascism's presence in Rome varies according to the type of evidence left behind by history. Only the most apparent, imposing images of Fascism such as statues of Mussolini and Fasces imagery were removed or destroyed. However not all striking Fascist images were removed such as the the Dux Obelisk.²⁰⁹ On the other hand those that had an aesthetic or functional interest such as the Foro Mussolini and Palazzo della Civiltà were not eliminated but instead preserved, renamed, altered, neglected, or re-used.²¹⁰ Alternative options other than the removal of Fascist creations is due to the many contributions that the regime made in terms of art, architecture, and city design. Taking this into account, leaving the Palazzo unused for many years was a direct result of the issues that Italians were facing, or not facing, in reconciling with their Fascist history.

²⁰⁷Kirchgaessner, Stephanie. "Fendi Rejects Criticism over New HQ in Mussolini Propaganda Building." *The Guardian*, October 22, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/22/fendi-launches-hq-in-mussolini-propaganda-building>.

²⁰⁸ Casciato, Maristella, e Sergio Poretti. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del colosseo quadrato*. Milano, Italia: Federico Motta Editore, 2002. p. 205 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

²⁰⁹ Ben-Ghiat, Ruth. "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?" *The New Yorker*, October 5, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/why-are-so-many-fascist-monuments-still-standing-in-italy>

²¹⁰ Malone, Hannah. "Legacies of Fascism: Architecture, Heritage and Memory in Contemporary Italy." *Modern Italy* 22, no. 4 (2017): 445–70. doi:10.1017/MIT.2017.51. p. 449; Page, Max. "The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing" *The Boston Globe*. July 13, 2014. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/07/12/the-roman-architecture-mussolini-still-standing/csZ70EN2fTnUUNqX0kRM9K/story.html>

The decision to re-use the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana was out of necessity for the city of Rome.²¹¹ Before Fendi rented the building, the Palazzo was used in two different manners. First, after the conclusion of the Second World War and the building's construction, the space was used to host the *Esposizione Internazionale dell'Agricoltura* or the International Exhibition of Agriculture in 1953.²¹² Afterwards, in 1956, the Palazzo was subsequently leased to the *Cavalieri del Lavoro*, the national federation of the Knights of Labor for twenty-nine years.²¹³ Once the lease was completed, the Palazzo was left vacant until the Roman Ministry of Cultural Heritage released a statement in 2011 declaring that the Mayor of Rome, Gianni Alemanno, il Direttore generale per le Biblioteche, gli Istituti Culturali e il Diritto d'Autore (the Director of Libraries, Cultural Institutes, and Copyrights) Maurizio Fallaze, the President of Eur S.p.A, Pierluigi Borhini, and many more important figures in the preservation and development of Rome and its architecture were going to meet and discuss the future of the Palazzo.²¹⁴ The statement specifically expressed that the improvement and development of the structure as a 'monument' and a 'symbol of EUR' will be analyzed.²¹⁵ Prior to the meeting determining the future use of the palazzo, the building was dubbed an area of "cultural interest."²¹⁶ Thus,

²¹¹ Malone, Hannah. "Legacies of Fascism: Architecture, Heritage and Memory in Contemporary Italy." *Modern Italy* 22, no. 4 (2017): 445–70. doi:10.1017/MIT.2017.51.p. 452.

²¹² Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." Essay. In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 82.

²¹³ Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." p. 82.

²¹⁴ Ufficio Stampa del Sottosegretario Francesco Maria Giro, MiBAC. "Presentazione Del Progetto Di Riqualificazione Del Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana All'eur." Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali e per il Turismo, February 14, 2011. <https://www.beniculturali.it/comunicato/presentazione-del-progetto-di-riqualificazione-del-palazzo-della-civiltà-italiana-all-eur> [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

²¹⁵ Ufficio Stampa del Sottosegretario Francesco Maria Giro, MiBAC. "Presentazione Del Progetto Di Riqualificazione Del Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana All'eur." [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

²¹⁶ Ben-Ghiat, Ruth. "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?" *The New Yorker*, October 5, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/why-are-so-many-fascist-monuments-still-standing-in-italy>

between 2006 and 2011 over 40 million euros of public funds were used to have the Fascist monument restored in order to prepare for its new use.²¹⁷

The decision for the fashion house Fendi to be the next occupant of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana was a calculated settlement that benefitted few but at great cost to many. In 2012 the Italian government announced the brand's fifteen year lease would produce 2.6 million euros of rent.²¹⁸ However, this amount is significantly lower than the appraisal carried out by the national agency of property which estimated an agreement of at least 4.5 million.²¹⁹ Somma in her essay regarding the Palazzo states that the negotiations for the rental contracts were conducted tacitly, away from public eye, allowing for a lack of regulation to impact the settlement. Riccardo Mancini, the EUR S.p.A CEO at the time was arrested for involvement in a mafia network.²²⁰ Due to this situation, the interim president of the EUR S.p.A hosted and received Fendi's extremely low offer by comparison to the original estimate of the building's worth. Regardless, once public, the government and the fashion houses' decision to make the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana Fendi's new headquarters was accepted and even praised by the Italian press, except for the Communist news outlets.²²¹ Only the extreme left-wing media addressed this issue. Internationally, the brand and the Italian administration received conflicting reviews over the controversial choice to use a Fascist monument as a base for a renowned trade name.²²²

²¹⁷ Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." Essay. In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 84.

²¹⁸ Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." p. 84.

²¹⁹ Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." p. 84.

²²⁰ Somma, Paola. "The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana: From Fascism to Fashion." p. 84.

²²¹ "Fendi Sceglie Roma, Il Cuore Della Sua Moda • MVC Magazine." *MVC Magazine*, June 25, 2020.

<https://mvmagazine.com/fendi-sceglie-roma-il-cuore-della-sua-moda/> [Translated by Kiana Camino and DeepL].

²²² Kirchgaessner, Stephanie. "Fendi Rejects Criticism over New HQ in Mussolini Propaganda Building." *The Guardian*, October 22, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/22/fendi-launches-hq-in-mussolini-propaganda-building>.

Once Fendi finally moved their headquarters to the Palazzo in 2015, a temporary exhibition was held to commemorate the grand opening, paying homage to the architectural structure. The ground floor of the building was converted in order to house the temporary exhibition entitled “Una Nuova Roma”, or A New Rome.²²³ Unfortunately, only a passing mention was included of the EUR neighborhood, known as E42 before the World War, and of the history of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. Mussolini is never mentioned during or throughout the display.²²⁴ Pictures and campaign shoots featuring the brand’s products with the building as the setting or in the background highlight the aesthetic appeal of the structure while veiling its history. Although photographs and other drawings of the plans for the building were included, little to no context was given to the exhibition audience (figures 30, 31, 32).²²⁵ “Una Nuova Roma” was only available to the public from October, 2015 to early March, 2016.²²⁶ The limited opportunity to see the exhibition in coordination with the lack of historical context merits mention. The building has been warped through memory to alter its perception from a Fascist monument to Italian culture, to a contemporary symbol of aesthetics and Roman design beyond its political implication.

How the building has been reused brackets its history in an attempt to alter site memory. Hannah Malone asserts that architecture is a vehicle in which memories are communicated through generations by means of selectively remembering.²²⁷ Malone is referring

²²³ Pincini, Alessia. “Roma: Il nuovo headquarter Fendi al Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana” *Elle Decor Italia*. October 27, 2015. <https://www.elledecor.com/it/architettura/g21081100/roma-nuovo-quartier-generale-fendi-al-palazzo-della-Civiltà-italiana-progetto-di-restauro/> [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deepl].

²²⁴ Pincini, Alessia. “Roma: Il nuovo headquarter Fendi al Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana” 2015.

²²⁵ Kirchgaessner, Stephanie. “Fendi Rejects Criticism over New HQ in Mussolini Propaganda Building.” *The Guardian*, October 22, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/22/fendi-launches-hq-in-mussolini-propaganda-building>.

²²⁶ Fendi Inaugura La Nuova Sede a Roma.” *LVMH*, November 4, 2015. <https://www.lvmh.it/notizie-documenti/notizie/fendi-inaugura-la-nuova-sede-a-roma/> [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deepl].

²²⁷ Malone, Hannah. “Legacies of Fascism: Architecture, Heritage and Memory in Contemporary Italy.” *Modern Italy* 22, no. 4 (2017): 445–70. doi:10.1017/MIT.2017.51. p. 446.

to the lack of recognition that occurs in Italian society when one encounters a Fascist building or relic still standing in the city of Rome today. The importance of this cultural phenomenon cannot be overstated. Germany's government and populace have made countless efforts to confront its history and advocate for education and awareness.²²⁸ Italy, on the other hand, has not reconciled with its complex Fascist past. Although attempts to remove or alter Fascist monuments and creations have been made, these endeavors are undermined systematically.²²⁹ The unsuccessful efforts allow the continued presence of Fascist monuments, reflecting the lack of priority the government and people in power have when the option of implementing proactive measures to foster recognition and knowledge are presented.

The reasons behind the lack of transparency and proactive education measures surrounding Italy's Fascist history lies in the way the people remember or do not remember Fascism itself. "Fascism is an absent presence in Italy, as its memory is alive, but distorted, fragmented and obscured," has argued Malone.²³⁰ Independent variables alter the way in which one perceives history and by consequence, the relics left by said history. Not many academics, especially Italian scholars, mention Fascism when discussing architecture from the period.²³¹ Through architecture the government aimed to change the understanding and sentiment of the people according to urban and space design, making scholars' omission of the subject particularly alarming.²³²

²²⁸ Malone, Hannah. "Legacies of Fascism: Architecture, Heritage and Memory in Contemporary Italy." p. 449.

²²⁹ Page, Max. "The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing" *The Boston Globe*. July 13, 2014. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/07/12/the-roman-architecture-mussolini-still-standing/csZ70EN2fTnUUNqX0kRM9K/story.html>

²³⁰ Malone, Hannah. "Legacies of Fascism: Architecture, Heritage and Memory in Contemporary Italy." *Modern Italy* 22, no. 4 (2017): 445–70. doi:10.1017/MIT.2017.51. p. 446.

²³¹ Fuller, Mia. "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42." *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (1996): 397–418. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/261172>. p. 445.

²³² Malone, Hannah. "Legacies of Fascism: Architecture, Heritage and Memory in Contemporary Italy." *Modern Italy* 22, no. 4 (2017): 445–70. doi:10.1017/MIT.2017.51. p. 448.

Max Page, the historian and American Academy of Rome fellow, conducted an interview with key people who control the use and effects of the Fascist monuments still standing in Rome. In the article “The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing” he details the amount of Fascist creations which include various important roads like that of the Via dei Fori Imperiali and Via della Conciliazione.²³³ Page, however, focuses the majority of his article on two important relics, the Foro Mussolini, commonly known as the Foro Italico post-World War II, and the EUR district of Rome. The Foro Italico still bears an obelisk in honor of Mussolini.²³⁴ Some of the mosaics included in the arena depict the Mussolian conquest of Ethiopia.

The EUR on the other hand, although less obvious in nature, is described by Page as ‘propaganda.’²³⁵ Although a model Fascist city meant to exemplify the benefits of the system in place in Italy during the first half of the twentieth century, the EUR has now been labeled as ‘Rationalist’ by scholars and media outlets, separating the area of its Fascist roots.²³⁶ How the Foro Italico and EUR district, two blatantly Fascist constructions, are still in existence without any contextual awareness of their backgrounds begs explanation from those in power that goes beyond the premise of historical preservation.²³⁷ This is not an instance of cultural preservation, which is a proactive process of informing those who visit a monument of the situation that sparked their creation. The lack of information and transparency concerning the context of these monuments, proves that these Fascist symbols are ignored. Instead, these relics should be

²³³ Page, Max. “The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing” *The Boston Globe*. July 13, 2014. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/07/12/the-roman-architecture-mussolini-still-standing/csZ70EN2fTnUUNqX0kRM9K/story.html>

²³⁴ Page, Max. “The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing” *The Boston Globe*. 2014.

²³⁵ Page, Max. “The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing” *The Boston Globe*. 2014.

²³⁶ Page, Max. “The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing” *The Boston Globe*. 2014.

²³⁷ Page, Max. “The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing” *The Boston Globe*. 2014.

presented to audiences with information clarifying the context, function, and history of each respective creation in relation to Fascism to foster education.

Of particular interest to this thesis is Page's interview with Rosalia Vittorini the director of the Italian DOCOMOMO, an organization aimed at architectural preservation. When asked what Italians think of when they pass a Fascist relic, image, or building, Vittorini responded with another question: "What makes you think they think anything at all?"²³⁸ This simple yet alarming response reveals the attitude that has been applied when the question of Fascism and its continued influence in Italy is addressed.

Even more revealing is how little Italian scholars have sought to impact the socio-cultural dialogue and perception of Fascist buildings in the growing generation. Paolo Nicoloso, a historian specializing in Mussolini-era architecture states that these buildings are to be appreciated instead of scrutinized. "When Italian people see a monumental building they are grateful to Mussolini. They believe he did well for the people. They forget the dictatorship, the racial laws, the war."²³⁹ Instead of focusing on the implications, the *functions* of buildings, areas, and constructions takes precedence due to the sheer amount of development Mussolini was able to accomplish for the city of Rome. The functions of these creations include political, cultural, utilitarian, and as images of a united Italy. Page goes on to state that all of these instances are due to the fact that Italy never renounced Mussolini.²⁴⁰ Since the latter half of the 1900s Germany has invested in implementing educational campaigns on a regional and federal level to come to terms with the past and provide transparency and information on sights that have historical

²³⁸ Page, Max. "The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing" *The Boston Globe*. 2014.

²³⁹ Page, Max. "The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing" *The Boston Globe*. 2014.

²⁴⁰ Page, Max. "The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing" *The Boston Globe*. 2014.

significance.²⁴¹ These multifaceted and coordinating approaches that Germany has undertaken has yet to be done in Italy, where the little initiatives have limited impact at best.

Upon Fendi's rental of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, the media both domestically and internationally published stories regarding the fashion house's decision to use the space as the brand's new headquarters. Notably, in Italian news outlets the response was positive. Most of the articles published focused on the move as something that was good both for the brand and for the building's structural integrity.²⁴² Little to no mention of the construction's connection to Mussolini or Fascism was made. If the source mentions the context is it merely only in passing while the main point was renewal for the city and the building. In the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, the Palazzo is referenced as a "symbolic monument for the Romans," yet what symbols they refer to is not mentioned.²⁴³

Italian media outlets have published many articles surrounding the progression of Fendi, the ministry of culture, and the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. *Harper's Bazaar Italy* was more informative in terms of background and context when discussing the Palazzo.²⁴⁴ The article written in 2022 positively outlines the brand's move. The new venture involving the brand and the Fascist monument is bringing new life to the building and by default the entire area of the EUR.²⁴⁵ The publication also applauds the fashion house's efforts in restoring and conserving the building's original design, since the ministry of culture labeled it an architectural structure of

²⁴¹ Ehmann, Annegret. "Civic Education in Germany after World War II." *Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung*, June 2004. <https://www.bpb.de/system/files/pdf/F4FDUD.pdf>.

²⁴² Fiorentino, Flavia. "Apre il 'Colosseo quadrato' la sfida (vinta) di Fendi". *Corriere della Sera*. October 23, 2015. https://www.corriere.it/moda/news/15_ottobre_22/roma-apre-colosseo-quadrato-sfida-vinta-fendi-ff26d5e6-78ef-11e5-95d8-a1e2a86e0e17.shtml [Translated by Kiana Camino and DeepL].

²⁴³ Fiorentino, Flavia. "Apre il 'Colosseo quadrato' la sfida (vinta) di Fendi". *Corriere della Sera*. 2015.

²⁴⁴ "Colosseo Quadrato: Storia E Curiosità." *Harper's Bazaar*, November 2022. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/it/lifestyle/viaggi/a40649922/storia-del-colosseo-quadrato-a-roma-eur/> [Translated by Kiana Camino and DeepL].

²⁴⁵ "Colosseo Quadrato: Storia E Curiosità." *Harper's Bazaar*, November 2022.

cultural interest and thus its use should be for spaces that foster cultural learning like an exhibition or museum.²⁴⁶

Similarly, *Elle Decor Italy*, only praises the decision to house the headquarters of Fendi in the ‘symbol of the city of Rome’.²⁴⁷ Unlike *Harper’s Bazaar*, nonetheless, no background or history of the Palazzo is given. In fact the only statement made concerning its history is that the construction was postponed due to World War II and completed in the post-War years.²⁴⁸ Mussolini, Fascism, and the functions of the building as a political image, venue, and monument for Italian unification are not mentioned or referenced.²⁴⁹ The most important point that *Elle* makes is the announcement of the Fendi exhibition of “Una Nuova Roma” on the occasion of the opening of the new headquarters curated by Carlo Lococo and Vittorio Vidotto which include works by ‘great painters’ like Mario Sironi, Gino Severini, and others.²⁵⁰ It is important to note that these painters were political artists who were closely tied to the Fascist movement. Both Severini and Sironi’s works reflected their political sentiments and agenda. None of the aforementioned details of the artists are mentioned in *Elle*’s publication. The article goes on to outline how the Palazzo is not the first monument to be restored by the brand. Fendi has also fostered the renovation of other Roman monuments like the Trevi fountain and the Palazzo Fendi on Via Condotti.²⁵¹

International media and announcement agencies criticized the brand’s move as something that aestheticized Fascist symbols in a politically insensitive manner, verging a

²⁴⁶ “Colosseo Quadrato: Storia E Curiosità.” *Harper’s Bazaar*, November 2022.

²⁴⁷ Pincini, Alessia. “Roma: Il nuovo headquarter Fendi al Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana” *Elle Decor Italia*. October 27, 2015. <https://www.elledecor.com/it/architettura/g21081100/roma-nuovo-quartier-generale-fendi-al-palazzo-della-Civiltà-italiana-progetto-di-restauro/> [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

²⁴⁸ Pincini, Alessia. “Roma: Il nuovo headquarter Fendi al Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana” *Elle Decor Italia* 2015.

²⁴⁹ Pincini, Alessia. “Roma: Il nuovo headquarter Fendi al Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana” *Elle Decor Italia* 2015.

²⁵⁰ Pincini, Alessia. “Roma: Il nuovo headquarter Fendi al Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana” *Elle Decor Italia* 2015.

²⁵¹ Pincini, Alessia. “Roma: Il nuovo headquarter Fendi al Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana” *Elle Decor Italia* 2015.

perilous manner. *The Guardian* references the move as something that only a fashion house like Fendi can accomplish without significant backlash due to the economic capabilities of the shareholders.²⁵² Stephani Kirschgaessner, who wrote the article, discusses the exhibition of Fendi upon the inauguration of the building and criticizes the way the brand avoids including any information regarding the history of the Palazzo.²⁵³ She argues how Fendi has handled, or rather, ignored the context of the building speaks to a greater Italian problem: Italy and its people have not faced their Fascist past.²⁵⁴

Owen Hatherley, a writer for the *Architectural Review* starts his article with the sentence “The recent recasting of Rome’s EUR shows that Fascist values never really go out of fashion.”²⁵⁵ His article speaks about the dangers of flirting with Fascism. Specifically, Hatherley outlines how prevalent the relationship between fashion and Fascism has been and continues to be particularly in luxury brands like Chanel, Hugo Boss, Calvin Klein, and now Fendi.²⁵⁶ His article is one of the only publications that discusses the background of Italian Fascist architecture.²⁵⁷ Italian Fascist architecture is deeply embedded in politics, words like Modernism, and other labels which are characteristically neutral eliminate the Fascist element that is inherent in the very aesthetic choices fashion brands are praising.²⁵⁸

Fendi’s reaction to public sentiment regarding the rental of the Palazzo proves the discrepancy between the history regarding Fascism, their associated buildings, and the

²⁵² Kirchgaessner, Stephanie. “Fendi Rejects Criticism over New HQ in Mussolini Propaganda Building.” *The Guardian*, October 22, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/22/fendi-launches-hq-in-mussolini-propaganda-building>.

²⁵³ Kirchgaessner, Stephanie. “Fendi Rejects Criticism over New HQ in Mussolini Propaganda Building.” 2015.

²⁵⁴ Kirchgaessner, Stephanie. “Fendi Rejects Criticism over New HQ in Mussolini Propaganda Building.” 2015.

²⁵⁵ Hatherley, Owen. “Fendi Vidi Vici: When Fashion Flirts with Fascism.” *Architectural Review*, March 3, 2015. <https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/fendi-vidi-vici-when-fashion-flirts-with-fascism>.

²⁵⁶ Hatherley, Owen. “Fendi Vidi Vici: When Fashion Flirts with Fascism.” 2015.

²⁵⁷ Hatherley, Owen. “Fendi Vidi Vici: When Fashion Flirts with Fascism.” 2015.

²⁵⁸ Hatherley, Owen. “Fendi Vidi Vici: When Fashion Flirts with Fascism.” 2015.

contemporary reception in Italy. Pietro Beccari, the brand's chief executive, commented on the move as an opportunity for the fashion house to embrace its Roman roots and carry on an exchange between tradition and innovation.²⁵⁹ When asked about the implication of the Palazzo's Fascist origins and implications, instead of acknowledging the history, Beccari used the question as an opportunity to discuss the irrelevant nature of the architectural structures' political past.²⁶⁰ According to Beccari the Fascist connection is depleted of any significance since the importance of the building goes beyond politics. He states, referring to fellow Italians, "we never saw it through the lens of Fascism."²⁶¹ His argument demonstrates that when discussing Fascism's creations, the question of heritage and preservation of history can be manipulated to fit a narrative that focuses on the present and future. Malone uses Beccari's statements as evidence to show how in order for the Italian mentality to separate itself from the relics of Mussolini's regime, aestheticization demands removing the dimension of politics.²⁶² However, one must question the validity of that possibility due to the inherently political motivations that designed and created the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.

Leading up to, during, and currently, the brand incorporates 'iconic' elements of the building into their designs, campaigns, and decorations. The decoration of Fendi's store in New York City, and the boutique in Harrod's, London, both feature the arches characteristic of the "Square Colosseum" (figures 33 and 34).²⁶³ In addition, advertisements such as their Spring/Summer Collection of 2015 featured the arches in the displays where the products were

²⁵⁹ Ben-Ghiat, Ruth. "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?" *The New Yorker*, October 5, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/why-are-so-many-fascist-monuments-still-standing-in-italy>

²⁶⁰ Ben-Ghiat, Ruth. "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?" 2017.

²⁶¹ Ben-Ghiat, Ruth. "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?" 2017.

²⁶² Malone, Hannah. "Legacies of Fascism: Architecture, Heritage and Memory in Contemporary Italy." *Modern Italy* 22, no. 4 (2017): 445–70. doi:10.1017/MIT.2017.51. p. 456.

²⁶³ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism' The Palazzo Della Civiltà Italiana and Its Shifting Meaning." Essay In *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, 1st ed. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. p. 103.

strategically placed in various positions to hide or reveal certain parts of the new merchandise (figure 35).²⁶⁴ Models were displayed and photographed beneath the arches on various levels of the Palazzo wearing various pieces that were made famous by the fashion brand (figure 36).²⁶⁵ Even Fendi's ready to wear fashion show layout in the Milan fashion week 2015 featured arches and travertine elements to acknowledge and further push the synchronicity of the Palazzo and Fendi as being a single entity (figure 37).²⁶⁶

Fashion mogul Karl Lagerfeld, the Creative Director of Fendi since 1965 stated publicly that the decision to shoot the luxury brand's Fashion Week campaign in the Palazzo was due to the fame surrounding the building.²⁶⁷ He states: "This campaign expresses what Fendi is about for next Fall. It is very Italian. It is very Roman, it is luxurious, but at the same time it has a modern and young approach."²⁶⁸ Focusing on the Roman roots which, in this case, are Fascist, should be the focus! Unfortunately, the real origins of the building are trivialized, instead the focus is on the aesthetic elements that the brand has capitalized on. In a different interview, Lagerfeld stated that the building's significance goes beyond its history. "The past and history here are beyond 'good and evil' as Nietzsche would have said...it has to be filtered and transgressed."²⁶⁹ This sentence made by the Chief Creative Director demonstrates the 'filtered' and 'transgressed' strategy that the brand has applied in their use of iconic elements of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana in Fendi campaigns.

²⁶⁴ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism'." p. 99.

²⁶⁵ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism'." p. 99.

²⁶⁶ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism'." p. 99.

²⁶⁷ Martin, J.J. "Karl Lagerfeld and Fendi- Fashion Designer Karl Lagerfeld Looks Back on His 50 Years at Fendi". *Harper's Bazaar*, October 17, 2016. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/designers/a17910/karl-lagerfeld-fendi-collaboration/>.

²⁶⁸ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism'." p. 99.

²⁶⁹ Loncar, Jelena. "'F Is For... Fluctuating Symbolism'." p. 108.

Through pop-up stores and boutique designs the fashion house continues to create a narrative surrounding the building that focuses on the ‘international’ and ‘iconic’ nature of both Fendi and the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. Since 2015 multiple stores and pop-ups around the world have been opened by Fendi. Almost all of the pop-ups done since the new headquarters have been established have elements of the Palazzo to reaffirm and solidify that the image of the brand and of the architectural building are synonymous. In Ginza, Tokyo, Japan, the brand erected a new location modeled directly after the Italian Fascist building with a more contemporary twist (figure 38).²⁷⁰ The glass house has the same layout and features the characteristic arches which are lit up during opening hours. The same can be said for Fendi’s second location in Tokyo, which has the same lit arches as that of the Giza store (figure 39).²⁷¹ In Dubai, U.A.E, Fendi opened a concept boutique that combines lit up arches used in their Japan locations and the display layout used in the spring/summer campaign of 2015 to characterize their locale (figure 40).²⁷² In Hong Kong, Fendi recreated a smaller version of the actual Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana as their pop-up design (figure 41).²⁷³ Instead of the Fascist quote that is included in the original building, the fashion house has opted to replace Mussolini’s words with ‘FENDI ROMA’. Even seemingly small locations such as the boutique in the Doha International

²⁷⁰ “Fendi Mega Pop-up Store Ginza Chuo-Dori, Tokyo, Japan.” *Yaro Studio*. Accessed March 26, 2024. <https://www.yaro.studio/fendi-mega-pop-up-store-ginza-chuo-dori-tokyo-japan>.

²⁷¹ Phillips, Emily. “Ten’s to Do: Visit Fendi’s New Flagship Store in Omotesando, Tokyo.” *10 Magazine*, March 8, 2023. <https://10magazine.com/fendi-flagship-store-tokyo-seoul/>.

²⁷² Zargani, Luisa. “Fendi Introduces Uber Luxury Store Concept with Three VIP Rooms in Dubai.” *WWD*, November 21, 2022. <https://wwd.com/business-news/retail/fendi-introduces-uber-luxury-store-concept-dubai-1235425864/>.

²⁷³ Fendi FF Reloaded Pop-up Store at Harbour City.” *Harbour City*, May 17, 2018. <https://www.harbourcity.com.hk/en/article/fendi-ff-reloaded-pop-up-store-at-harbour-city/>.

Airport includes the arch in its branding to alter the elements of the Fascist building into something luxurious (figure 42).²⁷⁴

Most recently the fashion house's fashion weeks of both 2021 and 2022 have once again incorporated elements of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. However, the latest decor and campaigns used for Fendi's fashion weeks are almost, if not the same, as the ones used during the first years of the brands relocation to the Palazzo. In 2021, models displayed the new collection of ready-to-wear in the porticos of the arches on multiple floors, recalling the advertising Fendi used in 2015 (figure 43).²⁷⁵ The fashion week show held in Rome that same year was carried out in the loggia of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, where models walked the long outdoor corridor displaying the brand's clothing (figure 44).²⁷⁶ The fashion houses' Spring 2022 fashion show in Milan featured large steel arches that covered the runway (figure 45).²⁷⁷ Fendi was able to transform the space, and incorporate their *logo* in a subtle more contemporary manner. The layout is reminiscent of the 'brand's home' according to Vogue.²⁷⁸

The arch was and continues to be a prime component that the brand uses to strengthen the association between Fendi and the Palazzo, turning an iconic, Fascist detail into a FENDI motif. The ability of the brand to use these details continuously in their products, fashion shows, decor, pop-up designs, and more without contest or scrutiny merits mention. Fendi effectively

²⁷⁴ Zargani, Luisa. "Fendi Introduces Uber Luxury Store Concept with Three VIP Rooms in Dubai." *WWD*, November 21, 2022. <https://wwd.com/business-news/retail/fendi-introduces-uber-luxury-store-concept-dubai-1235425864/>.

²⁷⁵ Pantano, Italo. "Fendi Presenta La Collezione PE22 Alla Milano Fashion Week." *Vogue Italia*, June 19, 2021. <https://www.vogue.it/moda/article/milano-fashion-week-2021-fendi-collezione-estate-2022> [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

²⁷⁶ Pantano. "Fendi Presenta La Collezione PE22 Alla Milano Fashion Week." *Vogue Italia*, June 19, 2021.

²⁷⁷ Phelps, Nicole. "Fendi Fall 2022 Ready-to-Wear Collection." *Vogue*, February 23, 2022. <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2022-ready-to-wear/fendi>.

²⁷⁸ Phelps, Nicole. "Fendi Fall 2022 Ready-to-Wear Collection." *Vogue 2022*.

turns the previously perceived Fascist characteristics of the architecture into a consumerist luxury product through media and campaigns.

Since the rental of the Palazzo, Fendi has published multiple books regarding the architectural structure. The first book, published in 2017 in Italian, entitled *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*, is their most comprehensive work detailing the history of the building from the planning stages up to the introduction of Fendi. The book begins with a section discussing what constitutes a building to be called a monument. The answer is something that enchants, familiar but at the same time new, a monument is something that captivates and is a standing symbol.²⁷⁹ The symbol that Fendi claims this building represents, is the city of Rome. Although referred to as the ‘eternal city’ this monument reminds the people of their historical background while being rooted in contemporary times, thus accomplishing their definition of a monument.²⁸⁰

The book mentions the Fascist history of the building, however the quantity and quality of the information given is insufficient. The Palazzo is stated to be a “logo” of the Third Rome, the aim for the Fascist regime to materialize, done so by the architects whose design won the competition for the project.²⁸¹ The arches in this regard, are seen as an element that was characteristic of the *Stile Littorio*.²⁸² However, the book does not offer an explanation as to what *Stile Littorio* is, who it was developed, or used by. The iconic design aspects: the arches, their dimensions, and the statues, are outlined in terms of their respective alterations and additions. The quote inscribed on the side of the building is presented and accredited to Benito Mussolini, nonetheless, the context of the quote, which was included in a speech regarding the conquest of

²⁷⁹ Piazza, Mario, and La Cecla, Franco. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. Milano: Fendi Roma and Rizzoli, 2017. pp. 13-14 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deepl].

²⁸⁰ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 14

²⁸¹ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 86.

²⁸² Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 86.

Ethiopia, is omitted.²⁸³ The Universal Exposition of 1942 is discussed, but once again, is not framed in a contextual understanding of the area or the building.²⁸⁴

The Fendi book provides an analysis regarding how the building is received *aesthetically* by modern audiences and includes those who are critical and complimentary of the building. Bruno Zevi is cited as one of the critics who, only a few years after the building's completion, offers a severe analysis of the building. Zevi described it as a "monument that spreads Italy with sadistic fury."²⁸⁵ Gio Ponti's evaluation is that the nude arch is empty of any form or construction, implying that the building itself is an empty architectural shadow.²⁸⁶ Paolo Portoghesi, is commended for his interpretation of the Palazzo, which is described as the most articulated and fair.²⁸⁷ Portoghesi, who is an architectural historian and professor, states that the "Square Colosseum is a work of architecture of the kind that remains beyond its connection with transient and rhetorical ideologies...."²⁸⁸ In other words, although the Palazzo is a Fascist construction, its context is trivialized while the Palazzo's aesthetic and architectural grandeur is prioritized.

The publication goes on to describe the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana as a representative structure of Rome as a functional, post-functional, and post-modern city.²⁸⁹ In this regard, the EUR area is compared to the La Defense sector of Paris.²⁹⁰ A large difference between the two compared areas is the fact that the EUR is a Fascist construction while La Défense was originally an industrial area, later named and commemorated for those who

²⁸³ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 86.

²⁸⁴ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. pp. 86, 189.

²⁸⁵ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 90.

²⁸⁶ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 88.

²⁸⁷ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 93.

²⁸⁸ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 93.

²⁸⁹ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 128.

²⁹⁰ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 128.

defended the city against the Prussians in 1883.²⁹¹ The aforementioned background makes the comparison between the EUR and La Défense areas questionable.

The Fendi book compares Fendi models to the allegorical statues in the Palazzo.²⁹² As previously stated, the Palazzo has been featured in a number of campaigns and was the setting for models to advertise the line's ready-to-wear collections. These models were positioned under the porticos of the Palazzo's arches, where the allegorical Carrara marble statues are positioned.²⁹³ The book describes the model's postures as striking. Their identical, rigid positioning allows them to blend into the building, appearing natural.²⁹⁴ Since the statues represent Italian contributions in the form of various crafts and labors, the models represent the art of fashion, revealed in the arches of the iconic building.²⁹⁵ Italy's creations labeled 'made in Italy' are internationally desired and considered to be the epitome of well-made, luxurious commodities. So too then, is the Palazzo viewed in this manner since it was created, built, and stands for the people of Italy and their contributions.²⁹⁶

Three points must be considered in the publication sponsored by Fendi. Firstly, throughout the publication, the building is mostly referred to as the Square Colosseum, which is a colloquial name for the construction. By not using its official name, which has political associations, the wording allows for a distancing between the building and its context. As stated in multiple chapters of this thesis, the separation of the building and its context is one of the key problems of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana's contemporary reception. Secondly, when

²⁹¹ Clout, Hugh. "The Chronicle of La Défense (Die Chronik von La Défense)." *Erdkunde* 42, no. 4 (1988): 273–84. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25645312>. p. 275.

²⁹² Piazza, Mario, and La Cecla, Franco. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. Milano: Fendi Roma and Rizzoli, 2017. p. 114 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

²⁹³ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 144.

²⁹⁴ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 144.

²⁹⁵ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 144.

²⁹⁶ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 155.

discussing exclusively Fascist characteristics of the Palazzo, the information regarding their association to the regime is glossed over. When presenting the quote etched into the side of the building, although Mussolini is mentioned, the speech that this quote was taken from is omitted. The allegorical marble statues are not given proper focus and are treated as decorations instead of independent projects. Although the statues were included in the finished design, they were completed years after the dissolution of the regime, all of which is not included in the publication.²⁹⁷ Thirdly, the book is structured and written in a casual manner, formal conventions of writing are not applied. When taking into consideration the subjects discussed and not discussed, the causal language confounds the separation between the building and its history as inconsequential, placing emphasis instead on the aesthetics and current use of the Palazzo.

In the final chapter of the Fendi book *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana* an important interview between Pietro Beccari, the then acting CEO of the brand, and Marco Costanzi, the architect who restored and altered the building is provided. This interview is integral as it reveals sentiments of the brand and those part of the restoration. Beccari states that he collaborated with Costanzi to keep the integrity of the building by highlighting the previously existing characteristics when designing the layout of the office spaces.²⁹⁸ When asked what it means to have rented a building that is a symbol of *romanità*, Beccari answered that the building, like Fendi, are both emblems of *romanità*.²⁹⁹ Since the brand was created in Rome, and incorporates geometric characteristics in their designs, Fendi and the Palazzo are counterparts that

²⁹⁷ Casciato, Maristella, e Poretti, Sergio. *Il Palazzo della Civiltà italiana: Architettura e costruzione del Colosseo quadrato*. Milano, Italia: Federico Motta Editore, 2002. pp. 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95 Piazza, Mario, and La Cecla, Franco. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. Milano: Fendi Roma and Rizzoli, 2017. pp. 13-14 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

²⁹⁸ Piazza, Mario, and La Cecla, Franco. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. Milano: Fendi Roma and Rizzoli, 2017. p. 189 Piazza, Mario, and La Cecla, Franco. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. Milano: Fendi Roma and Rizzoli, 2017. pp. 13-14 [Translated by Kiana Camino and Deep].

²⁹⁹ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 191.

complement one another.³⁰⁰ Constanzi and Beccari bring up Karl Lagerfeld who was a fundamental character in the decision to rent the building.³⁰¹ Before the rental of the Palazzo, Fendi did not have a center of operations. Their business in Rome was divided into two parts, the offices were in the Palazzo Fendi and the workshop on Via Flaminia.³⁰² The rental thus signifies a representational and physical unification for the brand.

The question as to why the brand chose the ‘Square Colosseum’ is answered by Beccari. When choosing a location, the CEO states that they wanted to find a space that would be representative of the values that the brand stands for and speaks to the relationship that Fendi has with the city of Rome.³⁰³ Providing enough room to house the two departments that Fendi wished to merge under one roof was also pertinent in the decision. Since the building has iconic, model aspects and authoritarian contexts, Beccari has stated that the iconic has prevailed in this instance and has become a reality for the brand and the city.³⁰⁴ The alarm to associate themselves with a part of history has turned into pride since the brand and the building have united seamlessly thanks to the work of Constazi who adapted the Palazzo to fit the brand’s needs.³⁰⁵

The relationship issue of private occupation and public function is addressed in the interview. Beccari states that the public response to the brand’s relocation has been positive, since the move has brought attention and potential commerce to the EUR area.³⁰⁶ This is compounded by the fact that Fendi has revitalized the space around the Palazzo and other monuments such as the Trevi fountain and the Palazzo Fendi which benefits Romans and tourists

³⁰⁰ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 190.

³⁰¹ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 195.

³⁰² Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 195.

³⁰³ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. pp. 195, 198.

³⁰⁴ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 198.

³⁰⁵ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 198.

³⁰⁶ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 209.

since preservation is in the interest of the public.³⁰⁷ It should be noted however, that although the brand's position regarding private occupation and public function seems to be beneficial for both parties, the application has not been congruent with their statements. At the moment, the public is only allowed to enter the general space of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. The ground floor loggia is accessible, while the interior of the building is restricted to Fendi employees only.

A second book, published in honor of the Arnaldo Pomodoro exhibition, 2023, in English and Italian by Fendi entitled *Palazzo della Civiltà: il grande teatro della Civiltà* provides insight into the relationship among current brand leadership, government officials, and the ministry of culture. All three of the aforementioned entities provide a statement at the beginning of the title concerning the exhibition, the Palazzo where the display was hosted, and Fendi. Serge Brunschwig, the current chairman and CEO of Fendi, states that this exhibition is a continuation of the brand's effort to highlight Italian excellence in a way that honors artistic heritage and cultural patrimony.³⁰⁸ One of these efforts was the inauguration of the Palazzo as the brand's new home which brought a renewed energy to the construction, where the brand receives the public for exhibitions and other cultural presentations such as the Arnaldo Pomodoro retrospective.³⁰⁹ The Palazzo in this regard is the ideal host venue since it is "...symbolic of a constant dialogue between tradition and innovation, the cornerstones of Fendi's identity and a dynamic stage for fashion, design, and culture."³¹⁰ The success of Fascist tropes can be noted, since Fascism aimed to market the building precisely how Fendi is advertising it to audiences.

³⁰⁷ Piazza and La Cecla. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. p. 214.

³⁰⁸ Respi, Lorenzo, and Vilianni, Andrea. *Arnaldo Pomodoro: Il Grande Teatro delle Civiltà: The Great Theatre of Civilizations*. Milano: Skira; Fendi Roma, 2023. p. 5 Piazza, Mario, and La Cecla, Franco. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. Milano: Fendi Roma and Rizzoli, 2017. pp. 13-14 [Translated by Kiana Camino and DeepL].

³⁰⁹ Respi and Vilianni. *Arnaldo Pomodoro: Il Grande Teatro delle Civiltà: The Great Theatre of Civilizations*. p. 5

³¹⁰ Respi and Vilianni. *Arnaldo Pomodoro: Il Grande Teatro delle Civiltà: The Great Theatre of Civilizations*. p. 5

The Italian Minister of Culture, Gennaro Sangiuliano, had fervent approvals of the brand's initiatives. After giving recognition to Arnaldo Pomodoro, a renowned Italian sculptor, he states:

We are proud that the city of Rome can host the exhibition in the Palazzo...well aware of the need to share this artistic patrimony which, just as it had gone beyond the confines of artistic expression and broken-down established canons, has also gone beyond the confines of Italy...becoming a patrimony of the whole world.³¹¹

By inferring that Rome is the entity hosting the exhibition, he blurs the stark lines that exist between the brand's use of the Palazzo as a private occupational space and public functional area. The statement by the Minister of Culture is concerning, since the 'established canons' refer to the Palazzo's original function as a Fascist monument, something that has not and cannot be 'broken down'.³¹² His conclusion that the building has become a 'patrimony of the whole world' is alarming, given that the building was built *by Fascists for Fascist efforts*.³¹³ Comparatively speaking, it would be unthinkable for a German Minister of Culture to call the Nazi Kongresshalle in Nürnberg, which also has a colosseum likeness, an international symbol (figure 46). These comments confirm that the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, the crown jewel of Italian Fascist architecture, is being considered a *building built during Fascism* as opposed to being a *Fascist building* proving the prevalence of Italian exceptionalism.

Roberto Gualtieri, the mayor of Rome since 2021, was the most neutral of the three parties mentioned in the prologue to the publication. His commentary focused almost exclusively on the exhibition itself. Speaking at length about Arnaldo Pomodoro, he compliments the work of those who participated in organizing the retrospective of such a great Italian sculptor.³¹⁴ He

³¹¹ Respi and Vilianni. *Arnaldo Pomodoro: Il Grande Teatro delle Civiltà: The Great Theatre of Civilizations*. p. 9.

³¹² Respi and Vilianni. *Arnaldo Pomodoro: Il Grande Teatro delle Civiltà: The Great Theatre of Civilizations*. p. 9.

³¹³ Respi and Vilianni. *Arnaldo Pomodoro: Il Grande Teatro delle Civiltà: The Great Theatre of Civilizations*. p. 9.

³¹⁴ Respi and Vilianni. *Arnaldo Pomodoro: Il Grande Teatro delle Civiltà: The Great Theatre of Civilizations*. p. 11.

states that this coordinating effort, which involved multiple programs and contributors, is enriched by the city of Rome as the backdrop for the display of Pomodoro's works. The exhibition in this regard, is an experience that appeals not just to art lovers but to those who wish to observe this socio-cultural occasion.³¹⁵ He only mentions the Palazzo in passing, acknowledging that the retrospective will be hosted at the monument, while making no further comment about the brand nor the space itself.³¹⁶

The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana was created to be the most symbolic construction of Mussolini's regime, a monument that the government constructed for the glory of the people and Rome. The Fendi rental of the building has created new narratives concerning the Palazzo, altering the perception of the elements and history of the building. Fendi using the Palazzo to serve as the brand's headquarters demonstrates the dangers of normalizing something intrinsically controversial in nature. The brand's coordinated efforts through campaigns, decor, pop-ups, and publications has transformed the Fascist characteristics of the building into symbols of Fendi. Fascist aesthetics are now viewed as high-fashion, luxurious, 'made in Italy,' Fendi commodities sold to the public. Although the Palazzo does have an aesthetic appeal, the lack of transparency and the absence of proactive informational initiatives, creates a disconnected relationship between the past and the present, removing proper cultural heritage from the people and the city of Rome.

³¹⁵ Respi and Vilianni. *Arnaldo Pomodoro: Il Grande Teatro delle Civiltà: The Great Theatre of Civilizations*. p. 11.

³¹⁶ Respi and Vilianni. *Arnaldo Pomodoro: Il Grande Teatro delle Civiltà: The Great Theatre of Civilizations*. p. 11.

5. Conclusion: Memory Studies and Reception

The modern-day context surrounding the reception and interpretation of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana has transformed over the course of the 21st century. Despite all of the history and evidence about the Fascist architectural structure, there is little to no dialogue within the Italian government and scholarship surrounding the building's origins or the normalization of Fascist tropes and values of which have been adopted and continue to be used today. Fendi's selective process in marketing and advertising the building as 'iconic', 'high fashion', and 'made in Italy', is a direct reflection of the Fascist tropes that have become embedded in the social and cultural standards of Italy. Due to the circumstances surrounding post-war Italy, the memory and history surrounding Fascism in terms of its social context reveals the complicated nature that heritage plays within Italy. The post-war reaction to the Fascist establishments were not treated homogeneously. Only the most extreme symbols of Fascism were removed, but not all. Most buildings and spaces erected by Mussolini's regime were either reused, altered, or neglected. Due to the treatment of these Fascist structures, companies, like Fendi, were able to rent and use buildings such as the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana to serve as the brand's new headquarters. Fendi's involvement and use of the Palazzo has altered the reception of the building itself. Instead of recognizing the structure as a Fascist creation and monument, people associate the edifice with luxury, 'made in Italy' allure, and Fendi elegance.

Memory studies and media politics offer an explanation as to how separating time and space alter the way in which people remember certain historical events. Andrea Huyssen

explains that memory is a factor that affects the socio-cultural aspect of a given community.³¹⁷ In this context, memory and its alteration throughout time is important to analyze to understand the implications of the elements retained and those forgotten.³¹⁸ By studying specific historical events surrounding genocide, government systems, and moments of history that have a profound effect on a given society, Huyssen has come to a few conclusions surrounding this topic that is pertinent to understanding the contemporary reception of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.

After the Second World War, the world but specifically the West had seen a rate of technological innovation that was compounded by the Capitalist and industrial nature that since industrialization characterizes Western societies.³¹⁹ Mass media, marketing campaigns, the rise of museums and cultural institutions, visual arts, television, and literature, all alter the way in which people view a certain moment or topic even if it may be subconsciously.³²⁰ In this regard, German sociologists have labeled this Western phenomenon as *Erlebnisgesellschaft*, or in other words, a consumerist culture obsessed with ‘record keeping’ that characterizes social media platforms, the visual arts, and marketing strategies of current societies.³²¹ However, how memory is dealt with is not on an international or political level but rather at a national or cultural one.

An important paradox emerges from various studies. The media seem to be the reason why sociologists claim memory and politics of amnesia occur in Western cultures. Why then, in a society that should be captivated with record keeping, has the pursuit of historical memory become the very method in which it is altered? One may be able to understand this paradox from a Freudian belief surrounding this topic. Huyssen explains that Freud’s view of memory and

³¹⁷ Huyssen, Andreas. “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.” *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 21–38. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-12-1-21>. p. 26.

³¹⁸ Huyssen, Andreas. “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.” p. 27.

³¹⁹ Huyssen, Andreas. “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.” p. 24.

³²⁰ Huyssen, Andreas. “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.” p. 24.

³²¹ Huyssen, Andreas. “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.” p. 29.

forgetting are connected as “memory is another form of forgetting while forgetting is a form of hidden memory.”³²² However, the fascination with memory in the 21st century is also a curiosity as it may be the fear of forgetting that motivates the preservation of said memory.³²³ Huyssen states that these phenomena are compounded by globalization. New studies are needed to determine the ramifications of these processes since existing investigations do not apply in the everchanging, mass-media environment that characterizes this generation.³²⁴

Rosario Forlenza, on the other hand, provides a different analysis concerning Italian exceptionalism and the memory of Italian Fascism. Italy during the Second World War went through various stages, all of which are unique to Italy since no other participant in the War experienced the roles of aggressor, resister, occupied, defeated, and victor.³²⁵ Due to the shifting role of Italy in the War, memory preserved splintered with each role change.³²⁶ Nonetheless, Forlenza argues that the symbols of cultural memory are what unified the people after years of division, uniting the people through these shared emblems of Italian identity.³²⁷ Taking this perspective and applying it to the subject of this thesis, the reason behind the complicated reception of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana is explained. Although the building is a Fascist monument in honor of the Italian people, after the War, in order for the populace to unite, the symbols such as those of *romintà* included in the design of the Palazzo, had to take precedence to secure the socio-cultural stability of the people. In this regard, by acknowledging the Fascist elements of the building, one could argue, would reveal divisions within the people of Italy. By forgetting certain details of the past, the people were able to ‘unite.’ However, this theory

³²² Huyssen, Andreas. “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.” p. 27.

³²³ Huyssen, Andreas. “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.” p. 28.

³²⁴ Huyssen, Andreas. “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.” p. 27.

³²⁵ Forlenza, Rosario. “Sacrificial Memory and Political Legitimacy in Postwar Italy: *Reliving and Remembering World War II.*” *History and Memory* 24, no. 2 (2012): 73–116. <https://doi.org/10.2979/histmemo.24.2.73>. p. 74.

³²⁶ Forlenza, Rosario. “Sacrificial Memory and Political Legitimacy in Postwar Italy:” p. 74

³²⁷ Forlenza, Rosario. “Sacrificial Memory and Political Legitimacy in Postwar Italy:” p. 76.

exposes the unstable foundation that the cultural unification of post-Second World War Italy was built on.

Removing the link of Fascism to Italian creations and innovations may have aided Italy to cope with the outcome of the Second World War in the short term. However, this short-term solution has been the dominant way of thinking that has been applied in the social culture of Italy as indicated by Rosalia Vittorini. When asked what Italians think of when they pass a Fascist relic, image, or building, she responded with a question: “What makes you think they think anything at all.”³²⁸ This way of thinking is a direct result of concepts, terms, and tropes made and marketed by Fascism, which in the post-War era, continue to be present in the social and cultural conventions of Italy. Distorting the past through memory instead of preservation through healing is a fleeting solution that has dangerous consequences for the future. Although there is no singular truth and perception is important in the context of history, one must recognize the importance of resolving the discrepancy between Italian sites of memory and Fascism. Coming to terms with Italy’s past is necessary in order for the preservation of Rome’s cultural heritage.

³²⁸ Page, Max. “The Roman Architecture of Mussolini, Still Standing” *The Boston Globe*. July 13, 2014. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/07/12/the-roman-architecture-mussolini-still-standing/csZ70EN2fTnUUNqX0kRM9K/story.html>

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