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ARCHITECTURAL PROPAGANDA AT THE WORLD'S FAIRS

**A thesis submitted to
Regis College
The Honors Program
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for Graduation with Honors**

by

Jason C. Huggins

May 2016

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Accepted by

Director, University Honors Program

*For my grandfather,
William C. Benway*

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PREFACE

I can remember the day I fell in love with architecture. I was five. I stepped out of a taxi in New York City and looked up. The image of the building I immediately noticed is still vivid in my memory. I may have no clue which building it was or where it was but I know it was old and after receiving a degree in Art History I can say it was most likely early 20th century, from the days of the early skyscrapers. I remember it having a façade of brick and stone, very tall, but not so tall I could not make out the sculpted cornice at the very top. That is the first memory I have of noticing architecture. Ever since, I have not stopped noticing architecture. I have tormented my family and friends, forcing them to ride along with me as I drive through neighborhoods or downtown Denver and admire the built environment around me. I think my admiration for architecture has influenced my life tremendously and will continue to do so. This love is what brought me to write this paper and although parts of what is written on the following pages may seem cynical, I am still fascinated by architecture every day and the profound effect it has on our lives.

I would have never have been able to accomplish this task if not for the support and guidance of several people along the way. First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Barbara Coleman, for believing this thesis topic could work, for telling me to read *The Devil in the White City*, and for all you have taught me over the

past three years. Thank you to Tom Riedel, my reader, who gave me a newfound love of using images while writing a paper. Thank you to Dr. Tom Howe and Dr. Cath Kleier, for all you did to keep us Honors kids on track while making the process memorable. I would like to thank Dr. Bowie, the former Honors Director, for teaching me the importance of telling stories. Thank you to Abbey King, cin cin. I want to thank my parents, for encouraging me to pursue whatever I put my mind to. And to all of my Honors colleagues, we did it! Thanks for the laughs and the camaraderie over the past four years.

INTRODUCTION

The inspiration for this paper came from Erik Larson's book, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America*. What was the fair that changed America? The 1893 Columbian Exposition, or World's Fair, was the quintessential Gilded Age affair that took place in Chicago from May to October of 1893. The time was referred to as the Gilded because of the extreme wealth and extravagance that seemed to cover in "gilt" the social issues of the time. An effort to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' expedition to the New World, the Columbian Exposition became one of the most visited events in world history.¹ During its tenure, 27,529,400 tickets were sold, which were bought by an estimated 12 to 16 million people from all around the globe.² On one day alone, 751,026 people came to visit the fair and take in all its wonder.³ The fair enchanted the nation and became a symbol of American progress. It catapulted the fair's Director of Works, Daniel Burnham, into worldwide fame. Burnham was directly in charge of the fair's design and its overall aesthetic appearance. Supported by a talented team of the country's most well known architects, Burnham set his sights on creating a world's fair that would rival all previous world's fairs and solidify America's rising

¹ The Columbian Exposition took place in 1893 instead of 1892 because the construction of the fair took longer than expected and the opening date was pushed back to accommodate.

² Graff, Rebecca. "Dream City, Plaster City: Worlds' Fairs and the Gilding of American Material Culture." *International Journal Of Historical Archaeology* 16, no. 4 (2012):704.

³ Larson, Erik. *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America*. (New York: Crown Publishers), 2003. 319.

status as a world power. The direct competition for the Exposition was the 1889 Paris World's Fair, which unveiled the Eiffel Tower to the world.

The design of the fair, especially the White City, is what piqued my interest. The collection of colossal white Beaux-Arts palaces that comprised a large portion of the fair gave the fair its moniker as the White City. The White City became a symbol of the Columbian Exposition and would later influence those behind the City Beautiful movement that swept across the United States in the first few decades of the 20th century. The main focus of the city was the Court of Honor, which was centered on a pool of water and surrounded by palaces serving various



Figure 1: Court of Honor

functions [Fig. 1]. Everything within this city seemed perfect. English historian and novelist Sir Walter Besant said, "Call it no more the White City on the Lake, it is Dreamland."⁴ Within the gates of the fair and surrounded by the monumental white structures, the White City did seem like a dream for many.

In countless ways the White City *was* a dream. Almost everything was an illusion. What appeared to be buildings constructed of marble and sculptures hand carved from stone were in fact plaster façades slapped against wooden and iron structures [Fig. 2]. The reality of the Columbian Exposition was that it was a constructed reality. In this dream world people came to escape the perils that lie

⁴ Larson. *The Devil in the White City*, 282.



Figure 2: Construction of the Administration Building,
1893 Columbian Exposition

just up the shore on Lake Michigan in Chicago. And in an even sorrier case, this “Dreamland” was not even a realistic representation of society at the time.

The White City represented a model for a city that was anything but white.

There were tremendous gaps between the wealthy and the working class. Labor unrest and economic turmoil were tremendous issues facing not only Chicagoans, but the United States as a whole.⁵ When the fair took place in 1893, the United States was in the deepest depression in the history of the nation. This was caused, in part, by what the fair would hail as American progress and innovation, industrialization that led to the overproduction of goods that flooded the market.⁶ Industrialization had created what Larson described as: “A miasma of cinder-flecked smoke blackened its streets and at times reduced visibility to the distance of a single block, especially in winter, when coal furnaces were in full roar.”⁷ The dark, industrialized city had nothing in common with the bright, pristine White City. The White City was also placed next to the Midway Plaisance, an area of the fair that displayed cultures from all over the world. The convenient placement of these displays of “non-white, non-Western” cultures

⁵Frances K. Pohl, “Historical Reality or Utopian Ideal? The Woman’s Building at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893.” *International Journal of Women’s Studies* 5 (1982): 302.

⁶ Carolyn Kinder Carr. *Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World’s Fair*. (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art and National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution), 1993: 38

⁷ Larson. *The Devil in the White City*. 28.

was used to further distinguish the accomplishments of the Western world as superior.⁸ Chicago, and many of America's urban areas, was anything but a dream for those who had to live in its limits.

The fair was not only made to be an escape for millions to enjoy. Within its design and planning there was an implicit, or maybe blatantly explicit to some, political and social message. The world was the fair's audience. According to the fair's designers, the world needed to see the United States' rise to international power. This rise was fueled by a sense of imperialism, which is a theme I uncovered in my research concerning the design and planning of the White City and its surrounding exhibits. It was while I was reading Carolyn Kinder Carr's *Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World's Fair*, that a particular line made me think of an idea I had concerning this paper. Carr explained "Everything about the fair resonated with history and culture, trumpeting its distinguished ancestry in the civilizations of Europe... For the fair planners, demonstrating mastery of the past was a way to lay claim to the future."⁹ The "distinguished ancestry in the civilizations of Europe" made me think of my time studying abroad in Rome, in which I had the experience of visiting the site of the proposed 1942 Universal Exposition, or the Esposizione Universale Roma (EUR) [Fig. 3]. Not unlike the 1893 Columbian Exposition, the Esposizione Universale Roma would be a reaction to

⁸ Pohl, "Historical Reality or Utopian Ideal? The Woman's Building at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893," 306.

⁹ Carr. *Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World's Fair*, 14.

current events of the time. Here, in this Fascist designed quarter on the outskirts of Rome, was where Mussolini had planned on showcasing the 1942 World's Fair.



Figure 3: Aerial Drawing of EUR Plan

The 1942 Universal Exposition had its own political and social messages. Construction for the Exposition began in 1938, when Italy was facing its own challenges as Europe was on the brink of World War II. Fascism began as a revolutionary idea in Europe in the early 1920s and succeeded in becoming the party in power in Italy with the election of Benito Mussolini as Prime Minister in 1922.¹⁰ Italy was the center of Fascist power in Europe before the rise of Nazism in Germany.¹¹ Mussolini watched as his stronghold in the world of European politics was slowly undermined by the rising might of Hitler in Germany. Even in the realm of architectural design, German architects were seemingly defeating Italian architects, as was the case at the 1937 Paris World's Fair.¹² Italy had lost design competitions to other nations, but especially Germany, which challenged Italian architects and their design aesthetic as *the* Fascist architecture.¹³ In 1935, Mussolini invaded Ethiopia and by 1936, had conquered the capital of Addis Ababa. The taking

¹⁰ Aristotle Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922-1943* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 246.

¹² *Ibid.*, 247.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 247.

of the Ethiopian capital was pivotal in Mussolini's establishment of a "Third Rome."¹⁴ He justified the invasion by claiming that as the ancient Romans had invaded and conquered Egypt, so he could conquer the contemporary equivalent to the bridge to the Middle East, Ethiopia.¹⁵ The League of Nations quickly condemned the actions of the Italian nation and the proposed fair was used as a method of atonement.¹⁶ The 1942 Esposizione Universale would be Mussolini's way of reminding the world that his Fascist empire was still relevant and that his regime would be the purveyors of a Third Rome. This Third Rome would be the third installment of a long line of Italian accomplishments; the first being the ancient Roman Empire, the second being the Risorgimento that unified Italy in the 19th century, and the third being the era of Mussolini.¹⁷

The similarities between the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the 1942 Universal Exposition struck me as almost astonishing. There, in Rome, was another White City; this one intended to be permanent. Still standing are several of the intended buildings for the exposition that was cancelled due to World War II. Within this area, is almost a time capsule. And with this time capsule, I plan to illustrate a connection between the White City and the EUR. Through my research I have found that both historical events utilized architecture for propagandistic effect. While further exploring this architectural propaganda I uncovered two themes that I

¹⁴ Mia Fuller, "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): 407-408.

¹⁵ Richard Etlin. *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 484.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 484.

¹⁷ Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922-1943*, 247.

would like to explore concerning both constructions. These two themes include imperialism and modernity. For purposes of this paper, imperialism will be defined as the territorial expansion and domination of one nation for economic and political benefit. Modernity will be defined and referenced as it related to the contemporary times in each period, or how each society tried to deal with being the most advanced nation. With these themes I believe it is possible to connect two completely different events in history to each other. I chose one building from each Exposition in which to evaluate and apply these themes. The first is the Administration Building from the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the second is the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana from the EUR. The themes I have proposed to explore can provide a lens to examine the implications of both designs. With these thematic lenses I hope to create a bridge between the White City and the EUR and provide new insights into how architecture can be implemented as political propaganda to enhance social and political ideologies.

CHICAGO 1893

On the shore of Lake Michigan, removed from the skyscrapers and congestion of the inner city in Chicago, there was, for a short time, another city. This city was built from the imagination of a few. It rose from the desolate and worn stretch of land known as Jackson Park near the South Shore of Chicago. It portrayed everything that an ideal metropolis should possess [Fig. 4]. The city symbolized the destiny of a nation and



Figure 4: Unknown, The White City, Aerial Drawing

its place within an increasingly changing world. Upon first glance the monumental buildings were made of stone, all white, all uniform in style. The city lured millions of curious individuals from all across the globe to witness the marvelous palaces and objects of curiosity that graced the landscape. It is said that many who came to lay eyes on the city wept upon sight, while Chicago lawyer Edgar Lee Masters called it, “an inexhaustible dream of beauty.”¹⁸ A dream though, is all the city was and the reality of this place was that none but one of the buildings were permanent structures. The stone was nothing but plaster painted gleaming white smeared against wooden and iron configurations. The entire production was an illusion. This place was called the White City and it was the heart of the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893.

¹⁸ Larson, *The Devil in the White City*, 252.

The idea for the 1893 World's Fair came as a commemoration for the four hundredth anniversary of the "discovery" of the New World by Christopher Columbus. This magnificent tribute would be called the World's Columbian Exposition and would be one of the most historic and influential gatherings of nations across the globe, but most importantly would showcase the grandeur of the United States of America and establish its authority in a modern world, as described by Timothy A. Hickman.¹⁹ The site of this extravaganza would be the industrious city of Chicago. As the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century brought great technological advancements into society it also made America's largest cities grow. Chicago was one of these cities that grew and by the time of the fair, the city was filled with the consequences of this growth. The air was full of smoke from the coal-fired boilers that kept the factories and manufacturing plants running.²⁰ Dead animals and waste could be found on the streets and in the Chicago River and, on the chance that a heavy rain would fall upon the city, all this filth and decay would be washed into Lake Michigan, toward the city's seemingly safe and abundant water supply.²¹ By the late nineteenth century, Chicago was a hostile setting, plagued with crime, disease, and pollution. The city was not anything like what the White City would be.

World's fairs have been events of a massive scale consisting of countless hours of planning and manpower to accomplish. These colossal and competitive undertakings became ways in which to display the growing and changing world and how the host

¹⁹ Timothy A. Hickman, "A Chicago Architect in King Arthur's Court: Mark Twain, Daniel Burnham and the Imperialism of Gilded Age Modernity," *Journal of American Studies* 48, no 1 (2014): 109.

²⁰ Larson, *The Devil in the White City*, 28.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

country could do better than the previous one.²² At the heart of the planning for the White City was Chicago's own famed architect Daniel Burnham of the firm Burnham and Root. It was in this decision that the entire course of the Exposition would be decided. In typical Gilded Age fashion monumentality was chosen rather than modesty.²³ This monumentality would be achieved through the style chosen for the main palaces and exhibit halls making up the Exposition. The main plaza within the White City was the Court of Honor. A grand canal was at the center of the Court surrounded by neoclassical buildings, which reflected the tenets of neoclassicism including columns, pediments, and what looked like marble, all as an ode to the architectural styles of ancient Greece and Rome. Each building was ornamented with sculpture and architectural elements of the past, each building added to the monumentality of the fair creating an environment that imposed itself on those experiencing the sight. Imposing monumentality aided in creating a form of political architecture heavily reliant on neoclassicism expressed through Beaux-Arts design. Beaux-Arts design insists upon the principles laid out by the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and is grounded in symmetry and strict adherence to the use of classical design elements all on a grand scale.²⁴ The Exposition became a stage and Beaux-Arts was at the center. While Beaux-Arts may have been an aesthetically pleasing style at the time for the design of the majority of the buildings at the Exposition, the implications of its use were great. The use of Beaux-Arts as the style for the White City pushed an agenda with the goal of showing what a city could be and society's relation to

²² Graff, "Dream City, Plaster City: Worlds' Fairs and the Gilding of American Material Culture," 699.

²³ Ibid., 699.

²⁴ Ibid., 703.

it as well as cementing the United States as the preeminent modern nation with imperial aspirations.

No such building of the Exposition demonstrated this goal through the use of Beaux-Arts more than the

Administration Building, located within the Court of Honor [Fig. 5].

The Richard Morris Hunt designed building fit comfortably within the neoclassical buildings surrounding it. The Administration Building was the focal point of the Court of

Honor. Located at one end of the

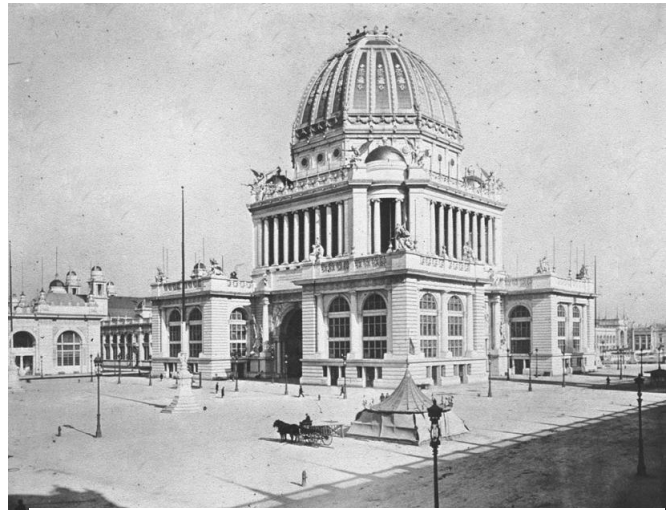


Figure 5: Richard Morris Hunt, Administration Building, 1893

canal rose the gold-domed structure. Gleaming white, it towered 246 feet over the buildings surrounding the canal. A base level, made of four square sections protruding from the corners of a larger central square, was ornamented with Tuscan engaged columns on each side separating rounded arched windows. Above each of these pavilions at the corners were classical styled sculptures in dramatic poses watching over the visitors below. The entrance to the building was a large arched portal surrounded with classically inspired relief sculptures [Fig. 6] These reliefs were mirror images of each other, victory symbols blaring trumpets, seemingly celebrating the arrival of Columbus to the Americas. These same symbols were used in Roman architecture, such as in the Arch of Constantine in Rome [Fig. 7]. Above the doors and these victories was an epigraph



Figure 6: Detail of Administration Building Entrance



Figure 7: Detail of Victory Symbol from the Arch of Constantine, Rome

that read, “Columbus sailed from Palos with three small vessels August 3, and landed on one of the Bahama Islands October 12, 1492.” Everyone who passed through this entrance would be reminded of the *glorious* expansion of the Spanish territorial holdings that had taken place 400 years earlier; another fitting example of an imperialistic power traversing the globe.

The second level of the building was an extension of the central square below. Each side was faced with a colonnade consisting of Ionic columns. Instead of square corners this level had a semi-round diagonal face framed with more Ionic columns where each corner should have been. These were then capped with smaller gilded domes. Like corners on the first level, these were topped with more dramatic sculptures depicting winged figures, perhaps more victories that almost watched over the Exposition, mainly the White City. They faced all directions and seemed as though they could leap from their perches and descend upon the scene below [Fig. 8]. These figures drew the eyes of the visitors up the façade, which led the viewers’ gazes to the towering octagonal gilt dome capping the building. The dome was on such a grand scale it even surpassed the size and

scale of the dome of the United States Capitol.²⁵ The gilding and ornate sculpture on this particular building differentiated it from all the others of the White City and made it a perfect example of Beaux-Arts design.



Figure 8: View from the Administration Building

The Administration Building was the most prominent and famed building from the Exposition. Not only was it designed by the most famous American Beaux-Arts architect of the time but it also

complied with the strict design

ordinances placed on the White City by Burnham. It symbolized everything the White City was designed to do. The building was relevant by association with Hunt, whose work had already brought Beaux-Arts to popularity with the elites of American society. Hunt's oeuvre still seen today includes the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City, and The Breakers, in Newport. The only stark difference from other structures within the Court of Honor was its heavy ornamentation through the use of sculpture and gilding. Hunt's four domes on the second level and the enormity of the central dome contrasted the designs of the other structures. It was prominent and overbearing, which is exactly what all buildings within the White City were supposed to be.

In order for the Administration Building to be relevant, Beaux-Arts needed to be made relevant to visitors of the Exposition. This style was epitomized by structures such

²⁵ Aaron Zephir, "Richard Morris Hunt: Administration Building, Chicago, 1893," *A Treasury of World's Fair Art & Architecture*, <http://digital.lib.umd.edu/worldsfairs/record?pid=umd:998>.

as the Palais Garnier [Fig.9] in Paris. By the time planning was begun for the fair, Hunt and other Beaux-Arts architects had become some of the most socially well-positioned professionals in their day, equivalent to business titans and old-moneyed elites in American society.²⁶ These people just so happened to be their clients, which aided in their popularity. Richard Morris Hunt was one of the most prominent architects to be involved with the fair. He was the first American to have studied at the



Figure 9: Charles Garnier, Palais Garnier, 1862

École des Beaux-Arts in 1846 and was one of the most successful to come out of the school.²⁷ Although several of the Exposition's architects, like Hunt, had reservations about designing buildings for a World's Fair, the eventual result was a collection of striking Beaux-Arts buildings that awed the everyday person passing through the White City. The incredible influence that came with this social standing and the extreme approval of the buildings by the public helped to bolster Beaux-Arts in American society via implementation at the Exposition.

With the popularity of Beaux-Arts at its peak, its use at the fair created a renewed interest in civic improvement. At the time of the fair, cities in the United States were far from anything that was considered ideal by architects like Burnham and Hunt. They were plagued with the consequences of industrialization and filled with crime and civic decay

²⁶ David Brain, "Discipline & style," *Theory & Society* 18, no. 6 (1989): 831.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 830.

that was abhorrent to the upper classes of society.²⁸ To Burnham, these qualities could be found mostly in the working class neighborhoods of America's large cities [Fig. 10], like Chicago.²⁹ Burnham saw the



Figure 10: Unknown, Rear Houses Near West Side, c. 1910, Chicago

Exposition as the solution to these problems. Through design he believed he could create a prototype for the perfect city devoid of any urban problems on the surface. Burnham explained this in 1895 by saying, “If you can’t reach them through mental reasoning, try them with lawful physical loveliness and see if they will not be quiet, receptive and happy, as they were in ’93, where they were brought into contact with order and system, which constitute the real soul of beauty.”³⁰

“Order and system” could be found wherever one turned within the White City. Not only were all the buildings the same color but also within the Court of Honor each building was given the same cornice height of 60 feet.³¹ Bombarded with the monumentality of the neoclassical spaces, a new model for the city was born [Fig. 11]. This is how a city was supposed to be. This is how society was supposed to live. The foulness of the industrialized American city would be in the past and a new city would be created from it, the *modern* city rooted in the stylistic traditions of Rome, the “real soul of

²⁸ Larson, *The Devil in the White City*, 28.

²⁹ Hickman, “A Chicago Architect in King Arthur’s Court: Mark Twain, Daniel Burnham and the Imperialism of Gilded Age Modernity,” 110.

³⁰ Ibid., 110.

³¹ Graff, “Dream City, Plaster City: Worlds’ Fairs and the Gilding of American Material Culture,” 703.



Figure 11: Photo of Court of Honor with People Showing Scale of Buildings

beauty.” The White City would cure society of its ills and overcome the urban decay brought by the lower classes through civic improvement. All of this was attempted through the “lawful physical loveliness” of Beaux-Arts design, the architectural style institutionalized by the elites during the

Gilded Age.³²

The emphasis placed on “order and system” through the use of neoclassical design was in complete reference to the glory of ancient Rome. Not only did the use of these motifs relay a message of social order but the aesthetic appeal of the ancient civilization also represented imperialism. By the end of the 19th century the United States was already on track to acquire the spoils of an expanding American empire. A new empire was emerging within the New World and everyone would become witness to its rise. Referencing Classical architecture cemented this stance concerning the United States’ empire. The designers of the Exposition believed that innovation could be exemplified in the use of neoclassicism. At its height, ancient Rome was the most powerful civilization on the globe and the United States was soon to follow suit, if the nation could somehow rid itself of the barbarism of the past.³³ The past versus the present

³² Brain, Discipline & style,” 831.

³³ Hickman, “A Chicago Architect in King Arthur’s Court: Mark Twain, Daniel Burnham and the Imperialism of Gilded Age Modernity,” 125.

played a pivotal role in making the design of the fair work. Burnham placed the White City at the end of what was known as the Midway Plaisance, a fantastical stretch of displays and curiosities that showed various cultures from different time periods, past to present, the “barbarism” that once plagued civilization. Of course these were all considered inferior to the “novelty” of the White City, the new model for how civilization should live.³⁴

How this “novelty” was expressed in the White City is debated and even was during the time of the Exposition. Chicago architect Louis Sullivan, who designed the Transportation Building [Fig. 12] for the fair, loathed the designs rooted in European

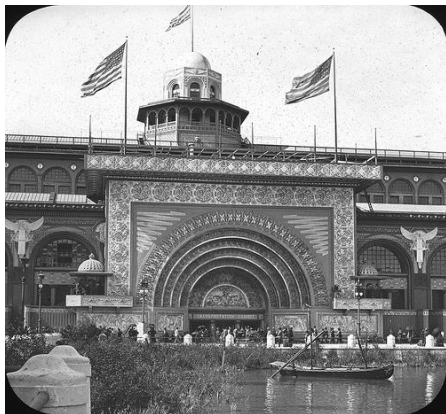


Figure 12: Louis Sullivan, Transportation Building

decadence, declaring the Exposition put American architecture behind fifty years.³⁵ He also felt the European design was out of context for a world’s fair taking place in the American Midwest, lacked American ingenuity, and was far from anything Modern.³⁶ The irony of Sullivan’s protest was that not even his design for the Transportation Building

was indicative of American architecture of the time. He chose to design a Middle Eastern inspired building completely breaking from the unity found within the White City. The buildings produced for the Exposition lacked a sense of American inventiveness Sullivan so desperately wanted to be showcased; yet he did not even produce this inventive, more

³⁴ Ibid., 116.

³⁵ Ibid., 114.

³⁶ Ibid., 114.

Modern design. The “novelty” of the present was not novel at all. Everything had been borrowed from past architectural styles. Nonetheless, Beaux-Arts was chosen despite the pushback of architects like Sullivan.

Unlike Sullivan, Hunt’s design reflected the theme of imperialism and the “novelty” that was espoused at the Columbian Exposition. The references to ancient Rome were abundant through the use of neoclassical design elements. The different columns, sculpture, and motifs came together to create a Beaux-Arts ode to Classical architecture. The significance of the references to Roman architecture may have been subtle to the everyday visitor of the Exposition but its implementation was driven by the sense of the United States as the new imperial power in the world. American architects and engineers could create these structures that on the outside could rival those of Rome. The reality however, is that these buildings may have only been comparable to Rome aesthetically. Structurally they were nowhere close to being similar to the imperial architecture of Rome. They presented to the public an image and image only. Illusionary at best, buildings such as Hunt’s Administration Building only took part in a show. They did not stand the test of time but instead showed the impermanence of world’s fairs. In the end, the Administration Building and those surrounding it set out to correct the time in which they were constructed. By echoing the monumentality and imperial authority of Rome it was hoped that society could once again return to that state and that the United States would be the nation to achieve it. But the city proposed by Burnham and the various architects was not the reality in which people lived and the “inexhaustible dream of beauty” Edgar Lee Masters described did in fact become exhausted. On July 5, 1894,

months after the close of the Exposition, arsonists, believed to be the unemployed of Chicago who had been squatting in the palaces of the White City, set ablaze to the “Dreamland” and Hunt’s domed archetype for the utopian metropolis was destroyed [Fig. 13].³⁷



Figure 13: Unknown, Manufacture and Liberal Arts Building Burned, 1894

The White City was not the last time a group would attempt to correct the times in which they lived or show imperialist aspirations through the use of a world’s fair. Fifty years later, in the city that inspired neoclassical design and thought, a fair was being planned to do the exact same. The Esposizione Universale Roma (EUR) was the proposed world’s fair of 1942, imagined by Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. Similar ideas would be implemented at this site, in which architecture would be used to propagate a new political architectural style that would shape a modern Italy as a world leader in an increasingly hostile world. This fair would attempt to revive the ideals of ancient Rome

³⁷ Larson, *The Devil in the White City*, 335

in the city itself and hope to deliver an imperial power that would emulate if not rival its predecessor.

ROME 1942

Six miles outside the center of Rome is a bustling suburb area known to locals as the EUR. The heart of this zone is a planned area comprising of monumental concrete structures clad in travertine and marble. This central hub of the EUR is filled with the remnants of a Fascist dream for modern Italy that was ultimately interrupted by World War II and eventually disbanded by 1942. The dominating buildings overwhelm the passerby and tower above the street. Wide avenues create sightlines that stretch from one end of the nucleus of the EUR to the other. It is at the end of one of these broad avenues, the Viale della Civiltà del Lavoro, that the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, or The Palace of Italian Civilization, can be found [Fig. 14].



Figure 14: Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana from Viale della Civiltà del Lavoro, Rome

The Palazzo is a shining example of Rationalist design, a uniquely Italian aesthetic with tenets similar to Modernism, which was designed by a team of architects consisting of Ernesto B. La Padula, Giovanni Guerrini, and Mario Romano.³⁸ It was supposed to be the focal point for the Esposizione Universale Roma (EUR), the official name of the 1942 World's Fair, of which the general commissioner to the fair, Vittorio Cini, claimed the EUR would be, "A city worthy to stand alongside the ancient but with

³⁸ Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*, 494.

something more that within its severe and powerful framework of architecture it will be capable of accommodating the multiple dynamic of life of today and tomorrow.”³⁹ As the focal point, every visitor to the proposed fair would see this building. Knowing this, the planners of the fair knew that the building that would be known as the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana needed to be impressive. It needed to show the goals of the Fascist regime led by Mussolini. Fascist architecture at the time was focused on two themes, modernity in the sense of portraying Italy as an equal to other modern nations and the establishment of a national identity under the idea of *romanità*, which translates to “spirit of the ancient Romans.”⁴⁰ The Palazzo was created to help achieve these goals and relay them to the people of Italy as well as the world.

The EUR itself was a proclamation of Italian efforts to become the ultimate fascist leader in the world. On December 18, 1938, the Italian publication *L'Illustrazione Italiana* announced to the public that the fair would take place, stating, “In the twentieth year of Fascism, the anniversary day of the founding of Rome, the Esposizione Universale will open, supreme manifestation of human civilization to which the Italians have given their highest contribution as a race of creators and builders.”⁴¹ This attitude that Italians were “a race of creators and builders” came from the Fascist inclination that contemporary Italians were the descendants and heirs of the ancient Romans, and therefore their empire. This sentiment was nurtured by Mussolini and eventually accepted

³⁹ Terry Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy: Visions of Utopia, 1900-Present* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2003): 136.

⁴⁰ Fuller, “Wherever you Go, There You Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR ’42,” 407-408.

⁴¹ Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*, 483.

by Italians under the idea of *romanità*.⁴² It was through *romanità* that an adoration of the nation was created and extreme national pride took hold over citizens.⁴³ This adoration was fueled by the belief that Italian civilization had reached its peak during the time of ancient Rome, from which the nation had “degenerated” until the rise of Fascism, which saved the nation and would restore the glory of ancient Rome in contemporary times.⁴⁴ This would become Mussolini’s establishment of the Third Rome.

The EUR would become this Third Rome through the construction of a permanent nucleus of buildings, between the old city of Rome and the ancient port of Ostia to the west. This permanent settlement between two ancient sites was planned as the new central core of Rome that would eventually become the new center of government fitting for “a race of creators and builders.”⁴⁵ Through the appointment of Marcello Piacentini as Superintendent of Architecture for the fair, the design for this core would be decided. Like Daniel Burnham in Chicago, Piacentini was responsible for issuing the “architectural directives” that would create “indispensable unity” throughout the fair.⁴⁶ Piacentini initiated a series of design competitions, with expectations laid out as follows:

⁴² Cristian Olariu, “Archaeology, Architecture and the use of Romanità in Fascist Italy,” *Studia Anitqua Et Archeologica* 18, (2012): 351.

⁴³ Per Binde, “Nature versus city: Landscapes of Italian Fascism.” *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space* 17, no. 6 (1999): 763.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 763.

⁴⁵ Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*, 483.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 491.

The Presidency expresses its full confidence in the talent of Italian artists who know how to express in daring and grandiose masses and lines the essential characteristics of a Roman and Italian architectural art. The classical and monumental sentiment, in the pure sense of this spirit, which has been manifested and has endured through the centuries in all the innumerable artistic expressions of our country, must be the foundation, yet with the most modern and functional forms, of the architectural inspiration. In short, the architecture of the Esposizione Universale of Rome must characterize the great era of Mussolini.⁴⁷

It was within these guidelines that La Padula, Guerrini, and Romano won the design competition for the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.

These three architects considered themselves to be Rationalist architects, a method of design rooted in the belief that it was the new architecture of the time, grounded in a close association between perceived logic and rationality.⁴⁸ Rationalist architects particularly thought of themselves as revolutionary and therefore aligned with Fascism since it was revolutionary at the time.⁴⁹ In the early 1920s they even criticized the work of architects like Piacentini, who they felt were not focused on moving Italian architecture forward into a new era.⁵⁰ These young architects were heavily influenced by



Figure 15: Le Corbusier, Savoye House, 1929

Modernist architect Le Corbusier, who implemented the use of modern machinery and construction materials such as concrete and metal, which are seen in his design for the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 491.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 382.

⁴⁹ Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922-1943*, 44.

⁵⁰ Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*, 385.

Savoye House [Fig. 15].⁵¹ Rationalist architecture is characterized by its large-scale projects, which focused more on urban planning rather than individual buildings. Large openings and an erasure of traditional distinctions between front and back, or inside and outside were common elemental forms of Rationalist design practices.⁵²

Rationalism was not always a well-received architectural style in Italy, especially within the circle of well-known Modernist architects of the time. This began to change however, at the beginning of the 1930s. Due to a concern with the advancement of their careers and the survival of Rationalist design, Rationalist architects had pledged their allegiance to Fascism in an effort to become the state architecture of Italy in 1931.⁵³ One Rationalist manifesto declared, “We Rationalist Architects, as Italians and as Fascists, cannot and must not permit the architecture which has only the decaying aspects, the cadaverous forms, be passed off as

Fascist architecture.”⁵⁴ The Rationalists were critical of architects like Cesare Bazzani⁵⁵, whose Palazzo delle Poste in Forlì represented the “cadaverous forms” so controversial to these architects [Fig. 16]. By 1932, Piacentini had accepted them into



Figure 16: Cesare Bazzani, Palazzo delle Poste, Forlì, 1931-1932

⁵¹ Ibid., 382.

⁵² Jeremy Melvin, *Isms: Understanding Architectural Styles* (New York: Universe, 2006): 106.

⁵³ Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*, 385.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 385.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 385.

various committees concerning architectural planning in Italy, which gave them means of support for advancing their design aesthetic.⁵⁶ It was most likely advantageous that Modernism had begun to be popular in Europe, as well. While Mussolini never officially adopted a particular architectural style for his regime, Rationalism became a favored style near the end of the epoch.⁵⁷ It was during this time that Rationalists had given Fascist architecture its distinct quality of monumental structures that would become a central theme to the EUR's construction.

The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana became a Rationalist triumph when construction began in 1938. Its design symbolized the goals of Mussolini, to be taken seriously as a dominant nation on the world's stage and to create a national identity through unity of design. The need to be considered equal to other nations was propelled by Mussolini's desire to establish a new Roman Empire, the Third Rome. The design of the Palazzo was on a monumental scale, which was partially achieved through the site chosen for the building, the highest elevation at EUR, and through the Palazzo being the tallest building.⁵⁸ The monumental height reaffirmed the belief that verticality and erectness symbolized civilization, while low-lying structures close to the ground symbolized "barbarism."⁵⁹ The large scale of the EUR in general was a direct proclamation by the Italian nation that it was able to compete with other modern nations. It showed that not only could Italy accomplish such an enormous feat of engineering and city planning but it

⁵⁶ Ibid., 385.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 385.

⁵⁸ Fuller, "Wherever You Go, There you Are: Fascist Plans for the Colonial City of Addis Ababa and the Colonizing Suburb of EUR '42," 399.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 399.

also had the ability to tap into its ancient past and create something far better than previously imagined by their Roman descendants.⁶⁰

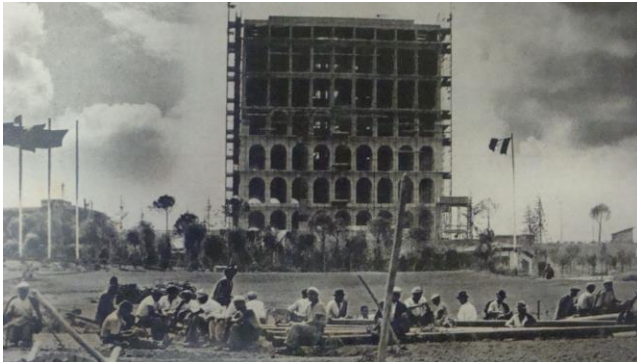


Figure 17: Construction of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana

In fitting with the Rationalist ideology of using contemporary building methods, a fusion of modernity and monumentality took place through the implementation of reinforced concrete that enabled the structure to reach a height of 230 feet [Fig. 17].⁶¹ Along with these modern construction techniques, the Palazzo was fitted with elevator banks built within a central tower encased with windows that enclosed nearly 130,000 square feet of exhibition space for the fair.⁶² The structure was then surrounded by a loggia of 216 repeating arches on all six floors of the building [Fig. 18]. The Palazzo showed that contemporary Italian architects and engineers could build something they believed to be the equivalent to ancient Roman engineering while at the same time updating it to technological advances of the time. Rationalist architecture fit into this belief because of their use of modern construction methods mixed with the reference to mostly external classical



Figure 18: Loggia of Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana

⁶⁰ Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy: Visions of Utopia, 1900-Present*, 135.

⁶¹ Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*, 382.

⁶² Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy: Visions of Utopia, 1900-Present*, 135.

design elements. If the present day Italians could create something just as architecturally profound as the ancient Romans, the most successful empire to have inhabited the globe, then that should put them at an equal, if not higher, level of respectability as modern nations of the time.

Reference to ancient Rome is abundant in the design of the Palazzo, most notably its similarity to the Colosseum [Fig. 19]. Often referred to as the “Colosseo Quadratto,” or the Square Colosseum, the Palazzo is a reimagining of the structure so popular and synonymous with ancient Roman architecture [Fig. 20]. Such an obvious reference to this



Figure 19: Colosseum, Rome

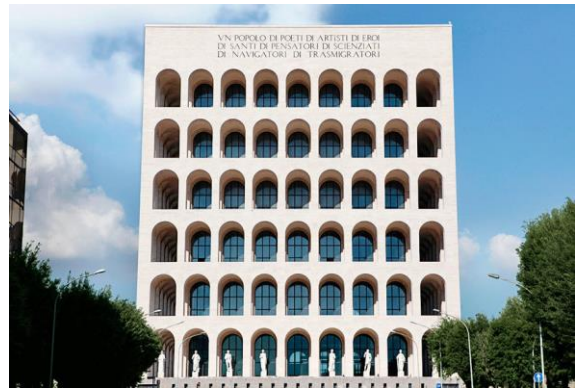


Figure 20: Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, Rome

famous building conjures up images of ancient Rome. The monumentality echoed by the Palazzo would equal that created by the ancient Romans still visible to this day.

Not only was the reference to the Colosseum supposed to be a symbol of the advanced engineering of the ancient Romans and contemporary Italians ability to emulate it, the aesthetic design was filled with symbolism as well. The aesthetic created for the EUR would become the new face of Italian design during the “era of Mussolini.” It has even been speculated that the initial design for the Palazzo was cubiform, but it was elongated to create a structure six arches high and nine arches across; perfect for

association with the spelling of Benito Mussolini.⁶³ This was incredibly important for the colonizing pursuits of the Italian nation. As Mussolini had invaded Ethiopia in 1935, the importance of establishing a national identity rooted in colonizing architecture became especially important. For the newly formed empire to work, or the “organic state” as was coined by the Fascists, it needed to consist of an aesthetic unity which would be achieved through urban planning and design.⁶⁴ The EUR would create this unified design for the empire and it was buildings such as the Palazzo and its Rationalist base that would express “in daring and grandiose masses and lines the essential characteristics of a Roman and Italian architectural art” that Piacentini described from the very beginning of the design stage of the fair.

The entire façade of the Palazzo played with these “grandiose masses and lines.” The structure is clad in travertine, a popular building material in Italy since ancient Rome. The idea of *romanità* and the Rationalist sympathies with referencing classical design were at the forefront of the plans for all structures built for the EUR, but especially the Palazzo. The use of travertine showed an acknowledgment to the same building materials used in ancient times, the predecessor to Mussolini’s new empire. While this similarity in building materials can be seen as an ode to past building practices, it is also the consequence of Italy’s imperial conquests. Invading Ethiopia in 1935 brought economic sanctions from the League of Nations, which forced Italian

⁶³ Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*, 494.

⁶⁴ Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy: Visions of Utopia, 1900-Present*, 389.

architects to use domestically produced materials for construction.⁶⁵ In other words, they had no other option but to use these materials.

This mass of travertine further enhanced the lines of ancient Roman architecture through the use of arches. The arches break up the façade of the Palazzo and give the building a rhythmic loftiness. These arches appear to keep going and going, possibly creating a symbol of Roman heritage and the endurance of Roman civilization throughout the ages.⁶⁶ In both of these symbolic references, through material and architectural elements, the fusions of the old and new come together, creating a unique aesthetic typical of Rationalist design that would embody the “era of Mussolini.” A national identity would be created, one born from the imperialist nature of the ancient Romans now embodied in their descendants, led by Mussolini.

If the Esposizione Universale Roma would have taken place, the Palazzo would have been the most prominent building witnessed by visitors. This was crucial to showing Mussolini’s Italy was capable of creating something that could be comparable to the glory of ancient Rome while using modern methods to achieve this. His empire would create something just as impressive as the ancient empire. The Palazzo created an image that would become a national identity rooted in architectural design. What would be presented to the people of Italy and the world would be consistent with the architectural heritage of Rome with a Rationalist twist. This can be seen in the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana through the use of travertine and the repetitive arches surrounding the building. These traditional elements were fused with the Rationalist approach to design, such as the

⁶⁵ Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*, 485.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 497.

large openings and ambiguity between front and back as mentioned earlier, to create an aesthetic that would be synonymous with the empire. Whether or not these messages would have been successfully relayed remains unknown. As construction for the EUR progressed into the 1940s, the project was halted due to the growing conflict in Europe during World War II. Not unlike world's fairs before it, the Esposizione Universale Roma was increasingly at odds with the reality it faced, as war progressed and Mussolini's Fascist empire was toppled. The EUR would remain incomplete for decades before being finished, an eerie reminder of a failed empire [Fig. 21].

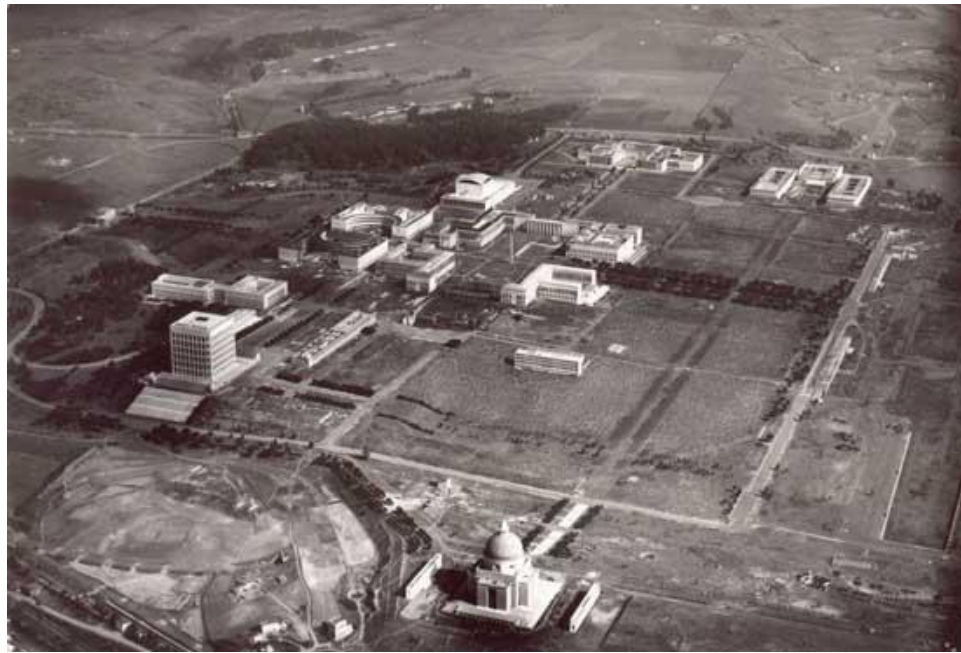


Figure 21: Site of EUR, Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana Left-Center, 1953

DIFFERENT TIMES, SAME STORY

The ideas of imperialism and modernity are both apparent in the planning and design of the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the Esposizione Universale Roma. The purpose of comparing the 1893 fair to the EUR is not to compare American democracy of the late nineteenth century to Fascism of the 1940s, but to instead show how each independent society used architecture to implement their own respective political and social ideologies to their own citizens and the world. Each group of planners developed their own system of propaganda translated through an engineered political architecture that was then relayed to the public. Through the implementation of specific styles, Beaux-Arts and Rationalism, each fair sought to create an image that would progress society into the future. The similarities between the two fairs can be categorized within the two themes presented earlier: imperialism and modernity. Through these two themes the politicization of architecture occurred.

Imperialism, in a sense of territorial expansion and domination of one nation, is evidenced in both the planning and architecture of both events. The most obvious reference to an imperial power was the reliance on Roman motifs that were heavily repeated. At the Columbian Exposition, not only were there constant reminders of Columbus' voyage that eventually grew the Spanish Empire, but also the use of neoclassicism was symbolic of the imperial nature of ancient Rome. An architectural style rooted in the design principles carried out by the ancient Greeks and Romans; neoclassicism referenced Enlightenment principles and the idea that someday, in the near

future, the United States could be a paradigm of ancient Rome. The symbol of this idea was manifested in Hunt's design for the Administration Building. A grandiose Beaux-Arts structure, it created shock and awe that would have been a dramatic experience as the towering dome loomed over the public.

In keeping with the Romans, the designers of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana created another monumental structure rooted in the idea of *romanità*, or the "spirit of the ancient Romans." The basis of Rationalist design required inspiration from imperialist Roman architecture. The Palazzo was thought of as a reincarnation of the Colosseum, one of the most well known Roman structures. This fit well with the imperial aspirations of Mussolini and his attempted creation of a Third Rome. Both fairs sought to create an image of the preeminent imperial nation of their respective times and referencing Rome, the most successful empire to have existed, only justified these claims.

The use of monumental buildings was crucial to claiming the imperial nature of these two nations. In Chicago, the monumentality and beauty of Beaux-Arts would inspire citizenry and pride within the public. This citizenry would then lead to civic duty emphasizing the creation of cities such as the White City. In the mind of people like Daniel Burnham, the city did not have to be a place of miserable conditions but instead could be something much greater. Monumental buildings could make American cities beautiful, as they were where "the real soul of beauty" lay in Europe. The idea that monumentality would win over the people was carried out by the designers of the EUR. As buildings like the Administration Building were meant to dazzle the senses and inspire those that passed by in the White City, buildings within the EUR were meant to

inspire Italians as well. Nothing was more in line with the idea of *romanità* than monumental buildings. The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana achieved this, through its height and scale. With this travertine-clad building, Mussolini's Italy was claiming that as the ancient Romans had built monumental structures before, Italian engineers could do the same, only better because of contemporary construction techniques and design. The essence of ancient Rome was achieved, inspired by antiquity and realized in the "era of Mussolini."

Heavy reliance on Roman designs no doubt aided in the relay of imperial aspirations of both nations to their respective audiences. But as Burnham stated, an emphasis on "order and system" would have no doubt controlled the way in which people saw and experienced the Exposition and the EUR. One of the most prominent resemblances between the two fairs was their creation of "order and system" through uniformity. Uniformity was achieved in the White City through the direction of Burnham. His implementation of the 60-foot cornice line and insistence everything within the city be Beaux-Arts created a "lawful physical loveliness." The most unifying element of the White City however, was the fact that everything was painted white, minus Hunt's golden domes crowning the Administration Building. The white was meant to emulate marble and stone, like that used in the EUR. The buildings of the EUR are all encased in travertine, hiding the concrete skeletons beneath. The uniformity in use of material has the same effect as the painted structures of the White City. In this way, Piacentini created his own version of the White City, only permanent in nature. The uniformity presented at the EUR would be the national identity of the Fascist nation. This is how "order and

system” create a uniformity that reflects imperialism. Empires are vast and filled with people of different cultures and backgrounds. The uniformity found within the Exposition and the EUR was the style chosen to represent these new empires and would traverse borders to create a cohesive unit and maintain the dominant order in colonies and territories.

While creating a uniform style across borders is one way to unify an empire, emphasizing the difference between the colonizer and the colonies is a perfect example of how the United States and Italy communicated their ideas of modernity to their respective audiences. An “Us v. Them” attitude was apparent in the early stages of planning for both fairs. At the Columbian Exposition this was evidenced by the juxtaposition of the Midway Plaisance to the White City. The White City was “Us” and the Midway Plaisance was “Them.” As mentioned before, the Midway Plaisance was filled with exhibits showcasing different cultures from around the world, many of them native cultures from their respective homelands. This area was nothing like the White City but its importance was nonetheless crucial to communicating the United States as a modern nation. The White City showed the superiority of American culture and inventiveness over the cultures of the past. The Midway Plaisance was also the most popular attraction of the fair, drawing a crowd that consisted more of the working class; those Burnham believed to be the root cause of issues within American cities. Once again, the Midway Plaisance became a place for “Them,” while the White City maintained its status as the epitome of high society. The designers of the Columbian Exposition were not the only group to create such juxtaposition between cultures. As Italy attempted to expand its

empire, references to the conquering of Ethiopia were popular. Mussolini even had an obelisk brought back from Ethiopia, in the same ritual ancient Romans used after conquering Egypt, to symbolize the dominance of the conqueror.⁶⁷ Italian civilization was compared to Ethiopian and this civilization was deemed inferior to that of the Third Rome.

The comparison of cultures played an important role in showcasing modernity as triumph for both the Columbian Exposition and the EUR, but ideas on modernity were also expressed through both fairs creation of a new model for the city. Both sought to improve urban life in their own way. Burnham focused on cleaning up the city through neoclassicism and park-like atmospheres. Places like the White City would inspire the masses to change. What Burnham's ideas on social change lacked however, was a willingness to give the people what they needed to change. The White City was focused on the superficial issues facing the society and failed to delve into the deeper problems. None of the actual problems facing society that created the urban conditions faced by those in the late nineteenth century were addressed, and in that way, the White City failed along with the City Beautiful movement that followed in the following decades. Like the White City, the EUR was created to become a new model for the city. Unlike the White City however, the EUR was permanent and supposed to become the new center of Rome. The significance of the design of the EUR was rooted in a deep sense that contemporary Italians were inheriting the empire of their ancient predecessors. With this, the new model for the city would need to be able to traverse the empire. The empire would be

⁶⁷ Etlin, *Modernism in Italian Architecture, 1890-1940*, 486.

connected through a uniform style that would be understood as Fascist. The new model would be a national identity created through architecture and city planning, emphasizing the monumental and presenting the essence of ancient Roman design principles. Both of these events were meant to present a utopian idea for each society to live by, both centered on the possibilities of urban planning. Alas, what they presented to the public was unattainable and the fairs did not address the respective realities facing their times.

The buildings presented in this analysis were focal points that epitomized the messages relayed for their respective settings. Both buildings became symbolic representations of aspirations concerning imperialism and modernity. Along with these themes, they created visual cultures that were used to the benefit of those in power in each respective society. Each building also represented the products of what the best perceived architectural minds of the times could create. These minds affirmed the institutionalization of accepted architectural styles, Beaux-Arts and Rationalism. Implementation of the themes into these designs explicitly shows the use of architecture as propaganda. This propagandistic effect communicated that these were the times in which each particular society lived. These were the styles chosen to represent the people and the people should reflect these chosen styles. While the 1893 Columbian Exposition gave rise to the City Beautiful movement popular in the early twentieth century, the movement was faced with the same issues as the Exposition; a failure to address the real problems behind urban decay. Since the Esposizione Universale Roma never happened, few ever came in contact with the space in the context it was supposed to be presented. Today the EUR is a suburb of Rome and a ghostly reminder of what could have been.

The ideas behind the propaganda are present in each however, but it was in the lack of proper execution and understanding of the current realities that each world's fair failed to attain the goal they so desperately sought to achieve.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this paper was to communicate the ways in which architecture is experienced. In terms of World's Fairs, the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the Esposizione Universale Roma clearly show the politicization of architecture and its propagandistic effect. The amalgamation of themes and styles can relay a particular message to an audience that is evidenced in the Administration Building and the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, the reminders of which are still present to this day. This is not a new idea; the ancient Romans were famous for massive, large-scale building projects that would create propaganda for whatever emperor was in charge at the time. The contextualization of the Exposition and the EUR is crucial to understanding the propagandistic effect they were supposed to have on the public. In each respective time period, the audience would have been

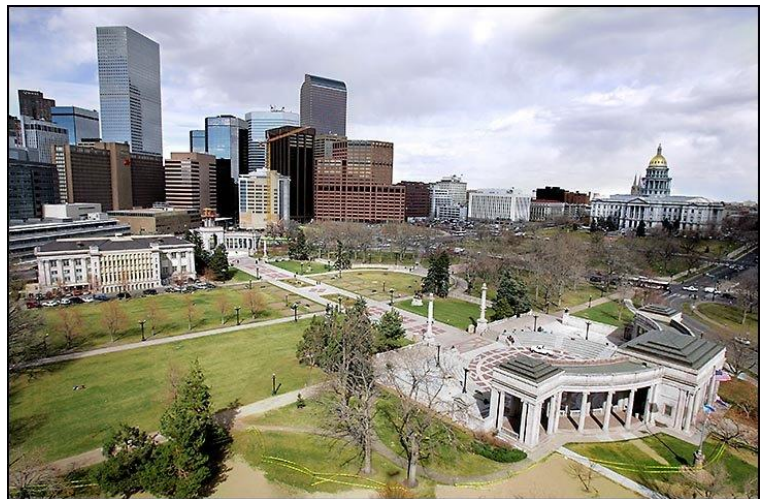


Figure 22: Civic Center Park, Denver

confronted with the use of neoclassical design references or the recreation of a Modern Colosseum and the messages each of those presented. Society today is confronted with messages like these through architecture but what seems to be a pressing matter today is

society's disassociation with the world around it, particularly its lack of awareness for the built environment.

Architectural propaganda can be experienced today if the awareness of one's surroundings is there. One can even experience the remnants of the City Beautiful movement in cities across the United States. Denver's Civic Center Park is a prime example of this [Fig. 22]. The axial plan of the park and the neoclassical colonnades are the quintessential elements used during the City Beautiful movement. It is also at the center of government for Colorado and Denver. In the park, government and citizenry come together to create an urban area that is not only beautiful but also ordered and rational. Washington, D.C. is another example of how people can experience political architecture. The National Mall [Fig. 23] and surrounding area were both products of the



Figure 23: National Mall, Washington, D.C.

City Beautiful movement as well. It is another example of ordered city planning, on a much larger scale than in Denver. Like the Exposition and the

EUR, both are monumental. They control the audience's movements and sightlines through their large open spaces. Both focused on making urban life more enjoyable while at the same time creating a connection between government and the public. It is examples such as these that the power of architecture to relay a particular message is present. They

both show how even in the current times the public can experience the effects of architectural propaganda. Architecture is an art form in which the public lives. It is experienced every day and is necessary for the built environment. But like other art forms, architecture can be manipulated for a particular point of view. The 1893 Columbian Exposition and the Esposizione Universale Roma are evidence of this manipulation in times of uncertain futures and power struggles.

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