

SYMBOLISM OF POWER : THE BAROQUE AXIS MODEL IN ROME, PARIS AND WASHINGTON

by

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ABSTRACT

The Baroque Axial Model for the city form has been recognized by researchers (Kevin Lynch 1989, Norberg-Schulz 1975) as an effective framework for the expression of central power. It has often been implemented by city planners in the past as a symbol of the central authority. This thesis aims to describe the symbolism inherent in this model by comparing the city axes in three specific examples.

- a) Rome, where the axis originated as a symbol of religious/political power.
- b) Paris, where the axis originated as a symbol of monarchical power.
- c) Washington, where the axis originated as a symbol of democratic power.

The above three cities are exemplary examples of Baroque axial planning. This thesis aims to study the expression and restatement of the symbolism of central power in these cities and to describe the similarities and differences that generate from their diverse context.

It also concludes with the possibility of use of the Baroque city form by urban designers in future.

The symbolism of the city form for a specified time period, is studied as i) an analysis of the symbolic reference of the axial core in relation to the city, ii) an analysis of the symbolic events performed on the axial core and analysis of the spaces that support these events.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTENT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Baroque Axial model has been used as a symbol of power in the history of city planning. Lynch mentions that it is a "strategy for the economical application of central power and lays the groundwork for public symbolism".¹ This thesis studies political symbolism in the city axes of three examples of Baroque Axial model. It aims to establish the significance of the Baroque axis city form as a symbol of power and evaluates its contemporary relevance. The persistent application of this city form for capital cities is evident all over the world. This thesis selects three cities that implement the Baroque axial plan with the intention of expressing power, each in a different political context.

- a) Rome, where the axis was a symbol of religious power. (Fig. 1.1)
- b) Paris, where the axis was a symbol of monarchial power. (Fig. 1.2)
- c) Washington, where the axis is a symbol of democratic power. (Fig.1.3)



Figure 1.1- The City of Rome



Figure 1.2:- The City of Paris



Figure 1.3 - The City of Washington

¹Lynch, Kevin. Good City Form. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1989. pp.281

The thesis studies the symbolism inherent in the city form by analyzing the symbolic aspect of the major axial zones that are representative of the city plans in each case. The selection of areas and time period of study in each city relates to the peak time in the development of the Baroque axial plan.

The areas selected for the study within Rome are the Piazza S. Pietro and Piazza del Popolo (Figure 1.4). For this study the time period is limited to the reign of Pope Alexander VII Chighi (1655-77). He was influential in bringing about the changes in the city of Rome during the Baroque period.

The area within Paris is the major East West axis from the Louvre to the Arch of Triumph (Figure 1.5). For this study the time period is limited to the reign of Napoleon III (1852-1870) i.e. the Second Empire. The Baroque axial model was executed in Paris under Napoleon III. He reigned as an Emperor in Paris for two decades. Although his prefect, Haussmann, is credited with the planning of Paris during this period Napoleon III was also directly involved in the planning process.

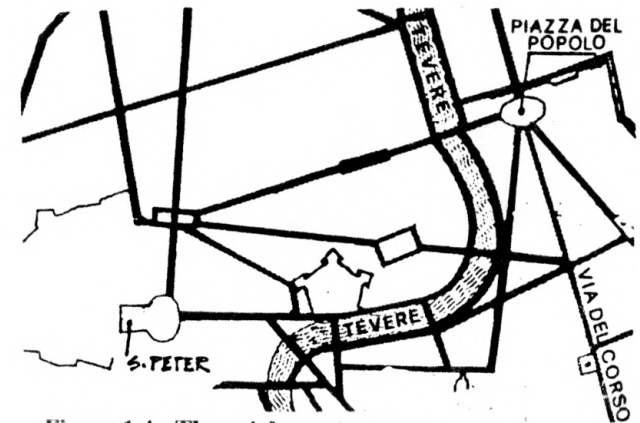


Figure 1.4 - The axial core in Rome

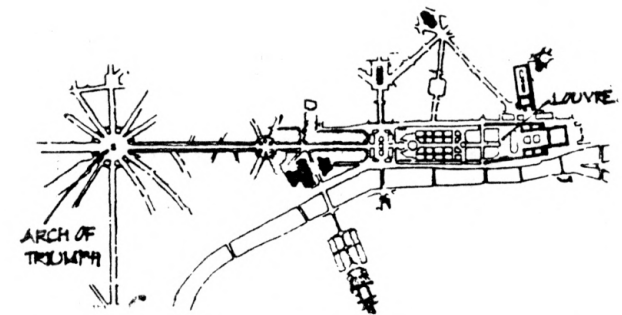


Figure 1.5 - The axial core in Paris

The area within Washington is the Federal Triangle between the Capitol, President's House and Washington Monument (Figure 1.6). For this study the time period is limited to the development of the axis under the rule of President Washington and President Jefferson. It was under the presidential tenure of Washington and Jefferson that the plans for the capital city were implemented. Washington selected the site and was involved in the planning for half a decade. Jefferson was actively involved in the initial design, as Washington's chief secretary and later as the President.

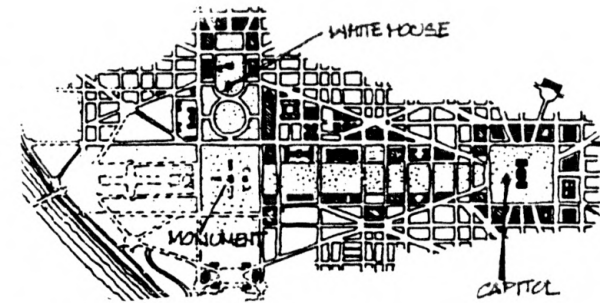


Figure 1.6 - The axial core in Washington

The symbolism of central power in the above three representational regions is studied from published sources in terms of the symbolic reference of the city form as a whole and an analytical study of the interdependent political symbols of axial space and public events in each context. Figure 1.7 illustrates the assumptions and research involved in this thesis.

This thesis uses three specific examples to provide an insight into the workings of the Baroque axial model. These three cities have been selected because they express the versatility of the model in different political milieu and also represent the chronological evolution of the model. The link between the three city plans has been mentioned by researchers

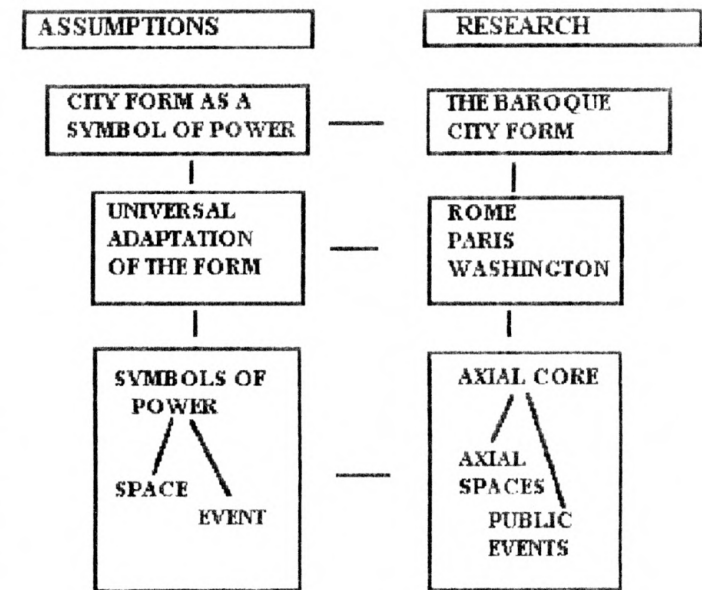


Figure 1.7 - Problem Diagram

including Lynch, Peets, Tunnard and Kostof.² Each city provides an example of the implementation of the same city form in a different political context. Hence, a comparative study of these three provides a rich source of information and a deep insight into the universal adaptation of this city form. The study of the city form in Washington helps in evaluating its significance in the present democratic society.

1.2 THE BAROQUE AXIAL MODEL

The term "Baroque" is used in relation to the concepts of architecture and city design that developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century European society. The dominating form of the Baroque axial model has been used as a symbol of authority in the design of several cities. One of the fundamental concepts of political theory was to establish the idea of authority among the masses by "falling back upon authentic and undisputable experiences common to all".³ The staging of such

² Lynch, Kevin. Good City Form. The MIT Press. Cambridge. Massachusetts. 1989
Spreiagen, Paul (Ed.). On the Art of Designing Cities. Selected Essays by Elbert Peets. Cambridge. Massachusetts. The MIT Press. 1968
Tunnard, Christopher. The City of Man. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1970
Kostof, Spiro. The City Shaped. Thames and Hudson. London

³ Arendt, Hannah "What is Authority ?" Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought. The Viking Press. New York. 1961.pp.7

experiences as formal public events required city spaces that would allow movement, gathering and focused view points (Fig. 1.8). These are the key elements in the Baroque axial model. This model constitutes a network of foci or nodal points marked by monuments, statues, obelisks, fountains etc., that are interlinked with straight avenues. The expansive avenues and the monumental built forms in the Baroque cities serve as reminders of the supreme political authority in these cities. Indisputably this city form "is about the staging of power."⁴ Rome, Paris and Washington are three axially planned capital cities that demonstrate this urban setting in their city forms. The physical attributes of these cities form the foundations for the display of the political power. The elements of Baroque systems interact and subordinate themselves to a dominant focus⁵

The spatial elements of the Baroque city form are the city axes, axial spaces and the monuments, obelisks and statues as the focal points. The meaning of these elements is linked to the activities performed in these areas. The axial core in the city stands out as the place of performance for

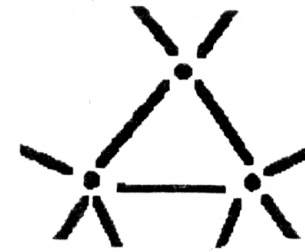


Figure 1.8 - The Baroque Axial form: a network of foci.

⁴Kostof, Spiro. The City Shaped. Thames and Hudson. London. pp.271

⁵Norberg-Schulz, Christian. Baroque Architecture. pp.13

the most significant events of the city. This is the stage for the ceremonies, processions, parades and coronations that symbolize the power of the central authority. Kostof comments on the political symbolism of these cities:

All cities are repositories of power in varying degrees and patterns. Cities designed in the Grand Manner employ conventions that make power physically manifest.⁶

The physical manifestation of the central power is displayed in the axial core of the three Baroque axial models of Rome, Paris and Washington. A comparative analysis of the spaces, events and their symbolic relationship in each context establishes the nature and degree of power or the sacredness of the central authority in each context.

1.3 SYMBOLISM

This thesis compares the planning model of the three cities with the underlying assumption that political power is strongly linked to symbolism. This assumption is based on the research done by Clifford Geertz and

⁶op. cit. Kostof, Spiro. pp.271

David Kertzer.⁷ Kertzer states that " Through symbolism we recognize who are the powerful and who are the weak and through the manipulation of the symbols, the powerful reinforce their authority."⁸ This relation is further emphasized by Geertz in his essay in "Rites of Power". This thesis also assumes the political nature of power in all three cities, of religious power in Rome, monarchial power in Paris and democratic power in Washington. This assumption is also based on Geertz's belief that "the gravity of high politics and the solemnity of higher worship spring from liker impulses than might first appear."⁹

Symbolism is the process in which the meaning manifested in physical objects or events that serve as symbols is communicated to a human being. This thesis uses Whitehead's definition of symbolism. Whitehead states that

" The human mind is functioning symbolically when some

⁷ Geertz, Clifford. "Centers, Kings and Charisma." Wilentz, Sean (Ed.) Rites of Power. Symbolism, Ritual and Politics since the Middle Ages. University of Pennsylvania Press. Philadelphia. 1985

Kertzer, David. Ritual, Politics and Power. Yale University Press. New Haven and London.1988

⁸ *ibid.* pp.5

⁹*ibid.* .pp.15

components of its experience elicit consciousness, beliefs, emotions, and usages, respecting other components of its experience. The former set of components are the "symbols", and the latter constitute the "meaning" of the symbols. The organic functioning whereby there is transition from the symbol to the meaning is called symbolic reference".¹⁰

Applying the above definition in the context of this study - the latter component or the "meaning" has been assumed to reside in the central power of each city. Hence, the thesis studies the former set of components i.e. the "symbols" on the city axes and their functioning or the "symbolic reference". The "symbols" of power for this study are identified, using Geertz's definition. According to Geertz, " a symbol refers to any object , act, event, quality or relation which serves as a vehicle for conception and the conception constitutes the meaning of the symbol."¹¹ Geertz, in his essay in the "Rites of Power" also mentions the significance of the formal events such as ceremonies, coronations etc. in the display of power. The significance of the ceremonial axial core in the Baroque form has already been emphasized earlier. Hence, this thesis will study two sets of symbols

¹⁰Whitehead, Alfred. Symbolism. Its Meaning and Effect. Cambridge University Press. 1928. pp.9

¹¹ op. cit. Geertz, Clifford. pp.179

in each case: the spatial symbols in the axial core and the formal events performed in the axial core of each city. These symbols are selected on the assumption that the space activity interaction relation plays a significant role in the exhibition of power. The spatial symbols include axial spaces and the physical elements that are categorized as "objects" by Geertz in the above definition. These physical symbols are the Baroque elements identified earlier such as the monuments, statues etc. that are present on the axis as representatives of the central authority. The interaction of the two sets of symbols and their symbolic reference dictates the intentional layout of this symbolic city form and determines its meaning.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

Description of the Method:

This method is adapted from Thomas Carney's book on Content Analysis¹². It consists of four phases as outlined below.

Phase I - The first phase deals with the sources of information. It involves

¹²Carney, Thomas .Content Analysis. A Technique for Systematic Inference from Communications. University of Manitoba Press. Winnipeg. Canada. 1972

literature search to define "symbolism" and identifies other sources of information. It also selects a set of variables that will be used to describe symbolism from the above literature.

Phase II - This phase deals with the collection of data. A list of questions and sub questions is prepared for the collection of data. These questions regard the issues such as the symbolic reference of the city form, the axial spaces in each city and the formal events performed in the axial core. The questions are related to the nature of events, how often they were performed and why were they performed. A second set of questions related to the events involves the spatial qualities of the axial core such as what kind of public spaces composed the axial core and how did they support these events. It also inquires into questions examining the physical symbols present in the axial core. These are questions for identification of these elements in the axial core and describing what they represent.

Sample of questions :

- a) What is the ideology behind the city form?
- b) What were the formal public events that were performed in the axial core in each city ?
- c) What were the preparations for these events?

- d) What was their meaning to the masses?
- e) How were the spatial characteristics in the axial core related to the performance of these events?
- f) List the physical symbols such as monuments and statues present on the axis.
- g) Who/What did these symbols represent?
- h) What was the strategy in the location of these symbols, on the axis?
- i) How did these symbols - events and spaces interact with each other?

The answers to the above questions, in the context of the city axis in Rome, Paris and Washington is collected through literature search. This data is descriptive and graphical. The symbolism of the city form and the axial core is described in each case; with a description and analysis of the symbols and their symbolic reference. The data collected for the three city axes is compared and suitable changes in the first set of questions are made. The three sets of description for the axial core is compared and a final set of questions are prepared for collecting information in the third phase.

Phase III - The third phase deals with the analysis and comparison of the data collected in the second phase. It analyses the symbols and symbolic

reference of the axial core in the three cases, using the final set of questions prepared in phase two and uses that analysis for a comparison of the symbolism of the city form in the three cases.

Phase IV - The last phase concerns interpretations and conclusions regarding the symbolism of the Baroque city form in the three cases and the significance of the city form in the present context.

METHOD DIAGRAM

PHASE I

Describe the references and sources of information for the study of axis in i) Rome ii) Paris iii) Washington	Research for the definition of symbolism and relation between symbolism, power and the Baroque axial model.
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PHASE II

Develop initial set of questions to study the symbols and their symbolic reference in the city axes.	Collect information about the symbols on the axial core in Rome, Paris and Washington using these questions.
Describe and compare the data gathered on the three axial cores from the initial set of questions and make changes in the initial set of questions, based on the comparison and develop a final set of questions.	

PHASE III

Describe and compare the symbols and symbolic reference of the axial core in the three studies, using the final set of questions.

PHASE IV

Interpretations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2: SYMBOLISM OF THE CITY

2.1 BAROQUE CITY: The Political Ideology

The notion of developing a city form resides in the ideology to control a large group of people with a defined cultural pattern. Amongst the various city forms it is the monumental design layout of the Baroque city that clearly states the intention to dominate and control - symbolizing the will for power. This Baroque design is based on the fundamental political ideology that authority is established in the minds of people by associating the masses with a set of events, rituals and activities that emphasize the hierarchical political setting. These events include such formal public gatherings, processions and parades - whose meaning is embedded in the governing power. The staging of such performances demands an urban network which allows movement, a place for gathering and focused vision of the authority - the key elements that determine the axial extensions and nodal points of the Baroque framework. This ideology behind the city form lead to the origin of the Baroque city in Rome.

Whereas the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were relatively static and enclosed worlds, the new capital city became the center of forces extending far beyond its borders. It became a point of reference for a whole world.¹³

The conceptual form of Baroque city (fig. 2.1) is conceived as a center with a desire to extend, reach out and control the rest of the world. This is explicit in its forceful axial dimensions. The political idea behind this form and its transformation with cultural development are analyzed in the plans of Rome, Paris and Washington.

Rome:

The Baroque Rome was a network of axes interlacing the city, introduced by Pope Sixtus V in 1590 and continued by Alexander VII Chighi as a direct link between the major churches (fig. 2.2). The aim of a religious propagation determined the planning of the city. The dominating framework demonstrates the presence of significant religious monuments within the city - establishing the form as a response to the political ideology of emphasizing the papal authority. The dominant power is

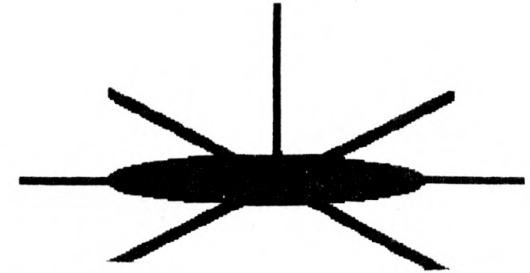


Figure 2.1 - Conceptual sketch of the Baroque City with force lines reaching outward.

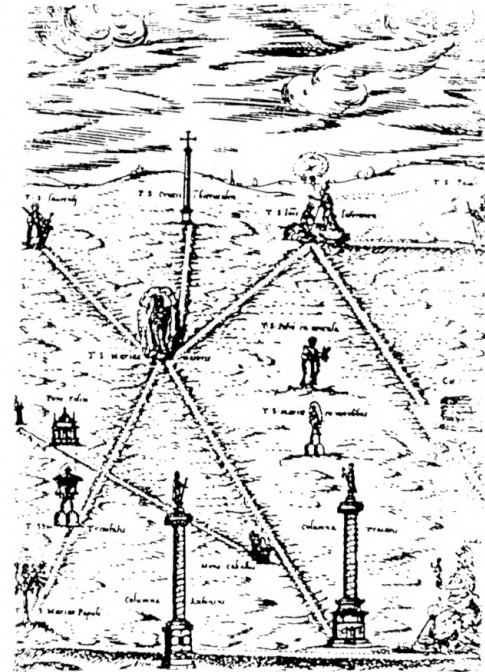


Figure 2.2 - Rome: Plan of Sixtus V

¹³ Norberg-Schulz, Christian. Baroque Architecture. Harry. N. Abrams. Inc. Publishers. New York. pp.16

expressed in the superposition of the Baroque form on the ancient pattern of Rome as most of the major axial extensions were preexisting Roman roads. The form is regulated by the presence of obelisks at nodal points which also indicate this metaphysical link to God. The vertical direction represents a rising up or falling down and has since remote times been considered the sacred dimension of space.¹⁴ The form thus establishes Rome as the sacred city at the center of the world expressing the belief of that age that all solutions can be found in the supernatural (fig. 2.3). A similar political ideology is expressed in each nodal point of the urban matrix - thus each focal point with the obelisk marked by a cross serves as a microcosm of the sacred city (fig. 2.4).

Paris:

The credit for initiating the application of the Baroque-Classical axial planning in Paris goes to Colbert who began axial extensions on the eastern side of the city in the reign of Louis XIV. This idea was expanded by the political intentions in Napoleon's dream to conquer the world. The desire for dominion is explicit in Haussmann's bold idea for the city form

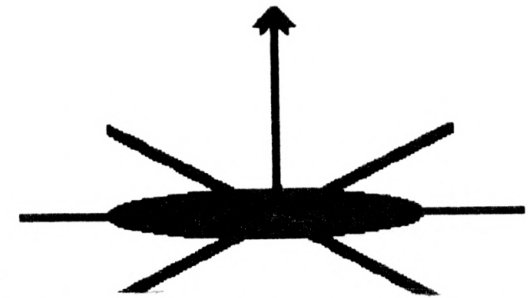


Figure 2.3 - Conceptual sketch of Baroque Rome with the axis in the sacred dimension.

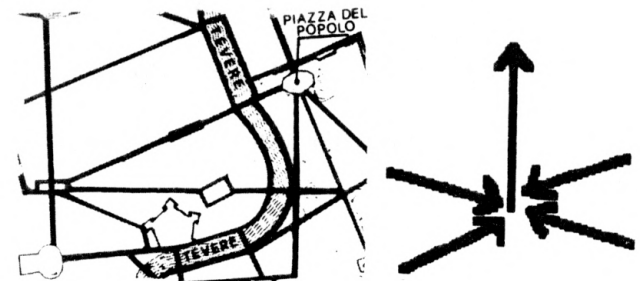


Figure 2.4 - a) Urban matrix in Rome. b) Force lines at nodal points.

¹⁴Norberg-Schulz, Christian. Meaning in Western Architecture. Praeger Publishers. New York 1975. pp.430

- extending from the major axis that originates in the monarchical symbol of the Louvre Palace (fig. 2.5). A closer look at the major axis shows its origin in a Romanesque church (St. Germaine) that exists beyond the Louvre Palace. One can thus speculate a metaphysical link similar to the one that has been discussed in the axis in Rome. However, the presence of this church is overshadowed by the imposing quality of the Louvre. This grand axis that moves towards the horizon into infinity, with the Louvre claiming its origin point- is a clear expression of the monarchical authority. The axial network is designed to reinforce the intimidating force of marching troops and the open axis is reaching out as if to conquer the world.

A map of Paris and its environs from 1740 would show that the whole landscape has been transformed into a network of centralized system which ideally have an infinite extension. Paris formed the center of an analogous system comprising the whole of France¹⁵.

The city form still retains a central location but extension in the horizontal dimension is emphasized - transforming the metaphysical link of the sacred city into a regional and physical link (fig. 2.6). It represents the advent

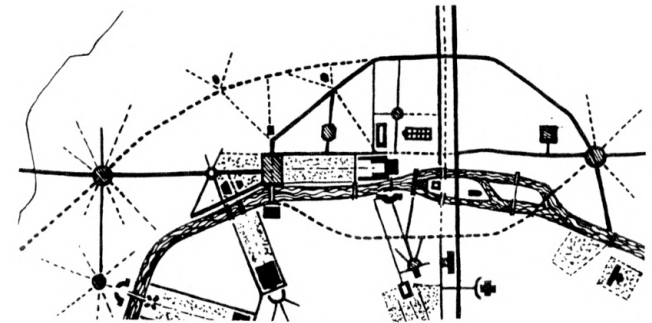


Figure 2.5 - Paris: Plan of Haussman

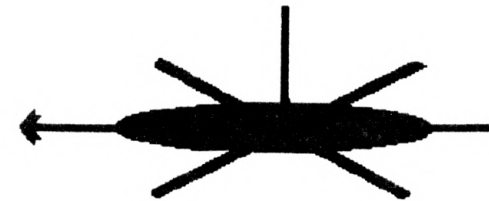


Figure 2.6 - Conceptual sketch of Baroque Paris with axis in the horizontal dimension.

¹⁵ibid. pp.289

of naturalism and the cultural awareness that all solutions can be found in nature. The design of the major axis was guided by Le Notre's principles for designing gardens. The Baroque principles at this time accentuate the infinite quality of nature rather than a transcendental connection to God as in Rome.

The main element is the longitudinal axis. It forms the path which leads the observer towards his goal: the experience of infinite space. All other elements are related to this axis. Transverse axes and radiating patterns are introduced to indicate the general open extension of the system.¹⁶

Whereas Rome is the typical "sacred city" of the Baroque, Paris forms its secular counterpart.¹⁷ The political idea to extend and to conquer can again be interpreted in the force lines projecting from nodal points of the urban matrix. (fig. 2.7)

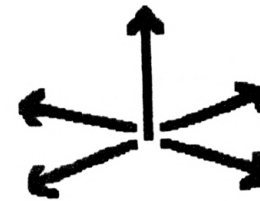
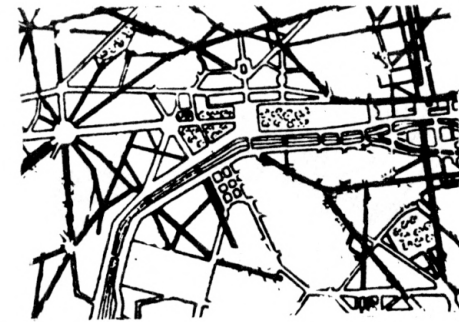


Figure 2.7 - a) Urban matrix in Paris. b) Force lines at nodal points.

¹⁶**ibid.** pp. 289

¹⁷**op. cit.** Norberg-Schulz, Baroque Architecture, pp.12

Washington:

The parallel ideas in Rome and Washington are evident on comparing Sixtus V's scheme with L'Enfant's proposal (fig. 2.8). The intentions of L'Enfant's plan also had similarity with the principles applied in French gardens; of dominating a large area and emphasizing grandeur. The Washington form represents the democratic ideologies of liberty and freedom. The comprehensive scheme implicit in the planning of Washington relates to the discovery of the New World. The basic form is composed by the superposition of the square grid on the diagonal Baroque framework. It was divided into 15 sectors that represented the 15 states of the Union at that time.

It had a deliberately abstract collective symbol, an ideology realized in terms of urban images, the allegory of a political organization whose socioeconomic consequence is a rapid and mobile evolution but which here wishes to present itself immobile in its principles. The city of Washington gives form to the immobility and conventionality of these principles, there represented as ahistoric¹⁸.

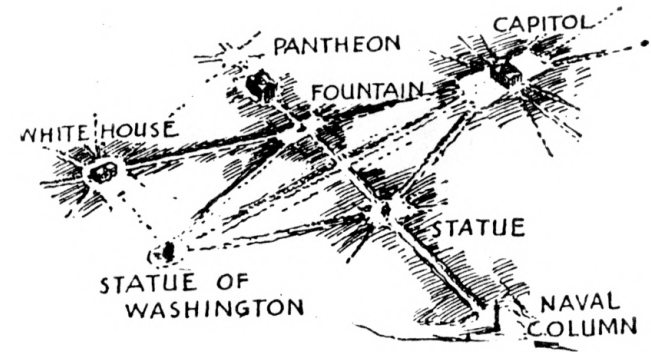


Figure 2.8 - Washington: L'Enfant's Scheme

¹⁸Tafuri, Manfredo. Architecture and Utopia. Design and Capitalist Development. The MIT Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England. 1992. pp.35

The city form in Washington lacks the sacred boundaries of Rome or the natural boundaries of Paris and is more open and sprawled out as compared to the other two cities (fig. 2.9). It reflects the "persuasive naturalism" where the dichotomy between the urban reality of the city and the reality of the countryside is lost.¹⁹ The openness of the structure reflects the freedom of the democratic society. Similar interpretation of the nodal points in the urban matrix is observed where the cutting across of two grids results in a confusing cluster of avenues - an allegory of the multiple options possible in the pluralistic society and the loss of absolute authority (fig.2.10).

The universal ideologies for projecting power are evident in each of these city plans but one can notice the transformation of the Baroque form with Rome as an introvert sacred city center with major axis in the sacred dimension, Paris with its major axis extending into infinity and symbolizing man's desire (Napoleon's will) to conquer the world and Washington where the city form lacks the sacred boundaries, spreading out and merging with its surroundings reflecting an age of authoritarian flexibility.

¹⁹ibid.pp.8

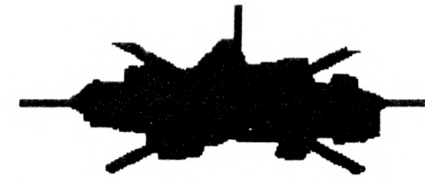


Figure 2.9 - Conceptual sketch of Washington city with force lines merging in all directions

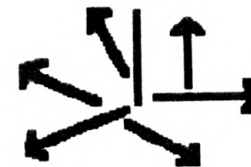
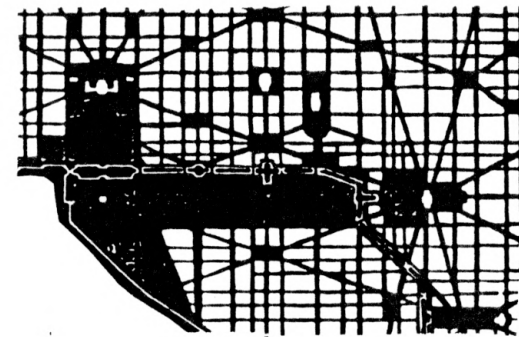


Figure 2.10 - a) Urban matrix in Washington b) Force lines at nodal points.

2.2 THE BAROQUE SPACE

The ideology behind the Baroque city form is also implicit in the city spaces.

The scientific development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gave birth to the dynamic concepts of the Baroque space. It was the knowledge of the earth revolving around the sun rather than being a stationary object that lead to an exploration of the infinite. Thus the axial Baroque space became a representation of movement often symbolizing a transcendental connection. This was, in effect, a pregnant infinity, full of symbolic connotations, which established a hierarchy with reference to the temporal power of the king or the spiritual power of the church.²⁰ In this infinite world, movement and force were of prime importance.²¹

Whereas the geometrically ordered universe of the Renaissance was closed and static, Baroque thought makes it open and dynamic.²² The Baroque space denoted movement and was designed as theaters for public

²⁰Perez-Gomez, Alberto. *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*. The MIT Press. pp.175

²¹op. cit. Norberg-Schulz, Christian. Baroque Architecture. pp.10

²²ibid.pp.10

performances, emphasizing the authoritarian symbols. The magnificence of the space was expressed in the commanding scale of the urban spaces. The transformations in the Baroque spaces through time can be associated with the political, social and cultural changes in time. The political symbolism of Baroque space in the cities of Rome, Paris and Washington is studied by analyzing the space and activities in the axial core of each city.

2.3 THE AXIAL CORE

The Baroque city form in each case has a central core which corresponds to the center of power. This is the stage for the enactment of the theatricality of power, the place of performance of the Baroque drama which gives meaning to the form. The axial core in the cities of Rome, Paris and Washington identified for this study are described as follows.

Rome:

The axial core of Baroque Rome was developed by Pope Alexander VII Chighi. Taking inspiration from Sixtus's idea of designing the city for pilgrimages, Alexander decided to display the grandeur to "the illustrious

foreigner"²³ who would visit Rome and go back with an image of aggrandizement imprinted in his mind. The circumstances surrounding the papal throne at the time of coronation of Pope Alexander VII were not too promising. The venue of political decisions had deviated from the papal throne in Rome to the newly developing powers in Paris and Madrid as well as London, Amsterdam and Istanbul. Alexander VII refused to accept the papal power as second to any other authority. To him, notwithstanding all political setbacks, the papacy was not only the one legitimate spiritual power, but it also towered over all temporal kings of this earth²⁴. These were the conditions that motivated Pope Alexander to create a new image of Rome that would reflect the grandeur of the city as well as the papal authority. This route for the visitors began from the Piazza del Popolo which marks the entrance of the city and follows the central axial offshoot i.e. the Via del Corso down to the core of the city. The route passed through significant locations in the city and culminated in an avenue to the left of the Vatican that lead into the Piazza S. Pietro. This study analyzes the Baroque structure of the city by studying the two most significant axial cores on this route (fig. 2.11).



Figure 2.11 - The Processional route in Baroque Rome.

- 1. Piazza del Popolo**
- 2. Piazza Venezia**
- 3. S. Andrea della Valle**
- 4. Castel S. Angelo**
- 5. Piazza S. Pietro**

²³ Krautheimer, Richard. The Rome of Alexander VII, 1655-1667. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. pp.131

²⁴ Ibid. pp.142

1. The grand entrance to the city marked by Piazza del Popolo and its axial offshoots. (fig. 2.12)
2. The grand finale to the route at the church of S. Peter's that leaves the visitor spellbound. (fig. 2.13)

Paris:

The city form of Paris indicates its origin in the Roman cross axes of *cardo* and *decumanus* which correspond to Haussmann's extension of the East West axis from the Champs Elysees to Rue de Rivoli and the North South axis of Boulevard Sebastopol. This development of the cross axis by Haussmann formed the basis for other axial offshoots resulting in the Baroque network. The East West axis cuts across the city dividing it into two parts and is parallel to the natural axis of the river. The axis was already significant at the time of Napoleon III with the two major monuments (the Louvre and the Arc de Triomphe). Haussmann developed the Place de L'Etoile as a rond-point around the Arc de Triomphe and further extended it to the Avenue de la Grand Armee on the West where it touched the corner of the urban garden Bois de Boulogne. On the eastern end too, the axis was extended as Rue de Rivoli, using monumental focal points. This study focuses on the development of the axis on the western

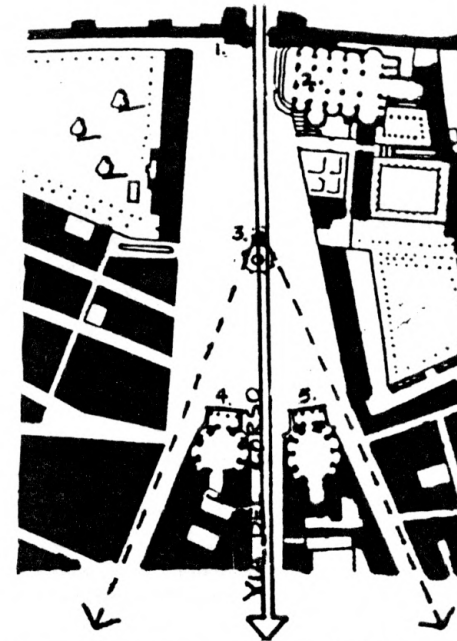


Figure 2.12 - Piazza del Popolo
 1. Porta del Popolo
 2. S. Maria del Popolo
 3. Obelisk
 4. S. Maria dei Montesmoto
 5. S. Maria di Miracoli

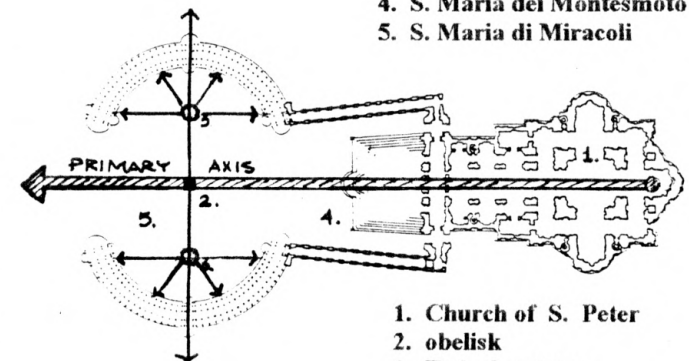


Figure 2.13 - Piazza S. Pietro
 1. Church of S. Peter
 2. obelisk
 3. Twin fountains
 4. Trapezoidal forecourt
 5. Oval piazza

end from the Louvre to the Place de L'Etoile as this was the major route for processions on festive days of the year (fig. 2.14).

Washington:

The city form in Washington seems more complex as the basic diagonal Baroque grid is superimposed by the grid iron one. The Federal Triangle with the major city axes formed by the Pennsylvania Avenue and the Mall controls the rest of the city form - boldly stating itself as a symbol of the democratic power of America. In L'Enfant's scheme, significance was given to the location and visibility of public buildings such as the Capitol and the White House. The division between legislative and executive power is given concrete expression in the "L" structure of the two main axes leading out from the White House and the Capitol and intersecting at the Washington monument.²⁵ The composition of the Capitol, President's House and Washington Monument is termed as "the basic triangle" by Elbert Peets who suggests this it is the "aesthetic driving member" in the design of the city (fig.2.15). The plan has a central controlling axial scheme or organization, intended primarily to give the Capitol and the

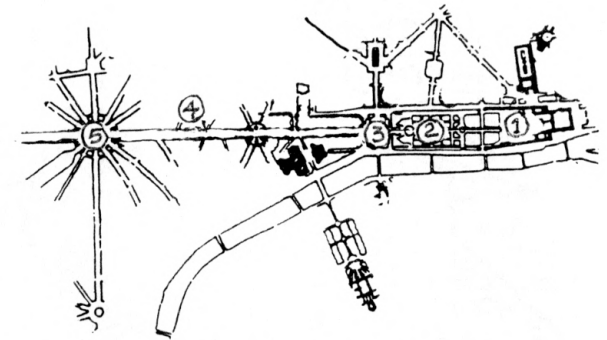


Figure 2.14 - The Processional Route in Paris.

- 1. The Louvre**
- 2. Tuileries Garden**
- 3. Place de la Concorde**
- 4. Champs - Elysees**
- 5. Place L'Etoile**

²⁵Tafuri, Manfredo. Architecture and Utopia. The MIT Press. 1992 .pp.32

President's residence effective places in the design and to enable them to dominate it.²⁶ The study focuses on this specific composition of grand avenues which have also been used for the display of democratic power since the formation of the city..

The axial core in each city core is associated with the image of the city, is the locus of all political activities and symbolizes the center of authority. The interaction of symbols of power such as space and activity in this axial core of each city generates the meaning of power in the city form. The next two chapters analyze the spatial symbols and formal public events in the city core of Rome, Paris and Washington as tools for the manifestation of power of the ruling authority.



Figure 2.15 The Federal Triangle in Washington.

- 1. The Capitol**
- 2. The White House**
- 3. The Washington Monument**
- 4. The Mall**
- 5. Pennsylvania Avenue**

²⁶Peets, Elbert. On the Art of Designing Cities. Selected Essays of Elbert Peets. The MIT Press. pp.19-20

CHAPTER 3: SYMBOLS AND SYMBOLIC REFERENCE-

Spatial Symbols

The axial core in each city plan controls the rest of the axial extensions. Its significance is further strengthened by the presence of symbolic monuments that are associated with the authoritarian image of the city. These monuments are the centers of political decisions. The axial core is composed of one or more major axial extensions for movement, a place for gathering of masses and a few physical markers for orientation that integrate the structure of the core. These three components tie up to produce the dynamism that is the essence of Baroque space. These are the spatial symbols that manifest power in the Baroque city. The axial core with these three components is the guiding force for the three city forms of Rome, Paris and Washington. It symbolically represents the image of the city and is the physical and metaphysical governing element for future development of the city.

As explained in the previous chapter, the political intention in planning the Baroque city is to manifest power by relating the inhabitants with a series of formal public events (in terms of processions, parades etc.) that are associated with the governing elite. The axial core in each city was thus

designed to support processional functions and has been analyzed in terms of these processional activities. The three major activities identified in the formal public events for this analysis are - movement, gathering and orientation of the procession. These activities resulted in corresponding spatial setting : the linear space designed for movement and the nodal space designed as a collecting point. The visual connectors of these spaces were the physical symbols that directed the movement of the eye towards the collecting point. This chapter analyses the axial spaces in the core that correspond to the processional activities in each city.

3.1 MOVEMENT

The Baroque avenues were designed to direct the movement of large processions towards the dominating political focus. The linear axial space was significant in the processional experience as it helped in building up the momentum, induced a feeling of motion towards something important, guided the procession to the representative of power and established his dominion. The transformations of the axial extension in Rome, Paris and Washington correspond to the variation in the processional movement and cultural awareness of each period. In the simpler and more rational words of Descartes we find the idea that spatial extension is the basic property

of all things and that differences are based on different movements.²⁷

Rome:

The Roman vistas were designed to control the pedestrian movement of the pilgrims. The directionality of the vista was supported by the Baroque elegance of small Palazzos on either side, that focused rather than distracted the vision of the pilgrim to the node or focal point (fig.3.1). The major processional vistas in the axial core of Rome are the Via del Corso projecting from the entrance piazza and the Borgho spine leading to the Piazza S. Pietro. On entering the Piazza del Popolo from the Via Flaminia, it radiates into three axial offshoots that go down to the heart of the city. This is the trident or the trivium of the Baroque axial planning (fig.3.2). This trident characterizes the piazza as open, the branches inviting the visitor to explore the depths of the city. It was the central branch, Via del Corso, which received maximum attention in the reign of Alexander VII as it was the main axial avenue for the processional movement. The vista was developed on the ancient roman road Via Flaminia that marked the city entrance and was an obvious choice for the



Figure 3.1 - The Via del Corso, street facade, Rome

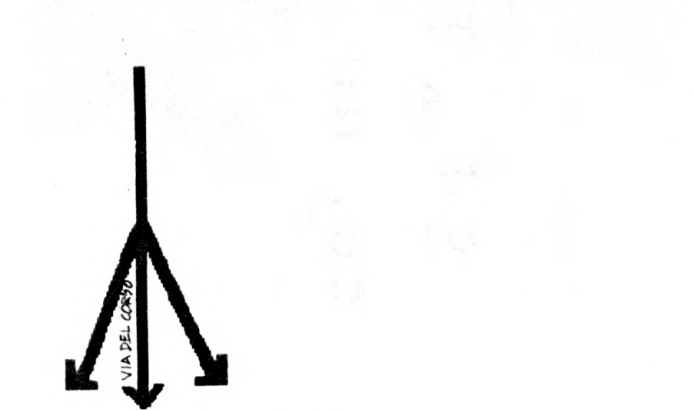


Figure 3.2 - Force lines in the trident of Piazza del Popolo, Rome.

²⁷op. cit. Norberg-Schulz, Christian. Baroque Architecture, pp.10

display of Baroque grandeur. The narrow Borgh streets entering into the Piazza S. Peter correspond more to the medieval streets as Bernini's Baroque plan for their expansion into a grand vista was not realized until later.

Paris:

In Paris, the attitude towards nature at the time of Napoleon resulted in treelined avenues called the "boulevards". The Champs Elysees was the monumental avenue used for major military processions. It is one of the best examples of the Baroque tree lined boulevard that evolved in nineteenth century France (fig. 3.3). To achieve the maximum effect on parade, the maximum appearance of order and power, it is necessary to provide a body of soldiers either with an open square or a long unbroken avenue²⁸. The scale of Champs Elysees was evidently selected for this purpose. The Parisian boulevards were designed to regulate the marching of military troops. The facades were monotonous with repetitive elements to direct the line of vision of soldiers on horseback. Lewis Mumford analyzes the movement in boulevards of Paris;



Figure 3.3 - The Champs- Elysees, Paris

²⁸ Mumford, Lewis. The Culture of Cities. Harcourt, Barace and Company. 1938. pp.95

The esthetics effect of the regular ranks and the straight line of soldiers is increased by the regularity of the avenue; the unswerving line of march greatly contributes to the display of power, and a regiment moving thus gives the impression that it would break through a solid wall without losing a beat. The building forms a setting for the avenue and the avenue is essentially a parade ground: a place where spectators may gather, on the sidewalks or in the windows, to review the evolutions and exercises and triumphal arches of the army - and be duly awed and intimidated. The buildings stand on each side, stiff and uniform, like soldiers at attention: the uniformed soldiers march down the avenue erect, formalized, repetitive: a classic building in motion. The spectator remains fixed: life marches before him, without his leave, without his assistance: he may use his eyes; but if he wishes to open his mouth or leave his place, he had better ask for permission first²⁹.

A junction of such boulevards created the "rond-point" of Baroque Paris (fig. 3.4). The rond-point originates in landscape design, where it refers to a large circular clearing in the wood. Kostof notes the loss of authority in the transition of the trivium, the baroque application of Rome to the rond point of Paris.

A generation or two later, past the mid-century, the symbolism in even such faint-hearted imitations of absolute power was

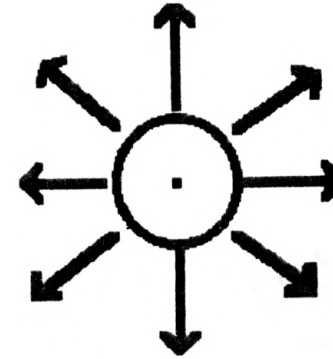


Figure 3.4 - Force lines in the rond-point of Paris.

²⁹ *ibid.* pp. 97

thoroughly anachronistic. The appetite of modern traffic resisted formal elegancies, and the trivium made way for more practical-stellated patterns.³⁰

Washington:

The avenues in the Federal triangle are designed for presidential processions based on similar ideology as the vistas of Rome and boulevards of Paris. However, the democratic freedom and the attitude to nature results in a rather loose structure with wide and expansive streets where the line of vision is lost in a foliage of trees. The Pennsylvania avenue is a grand avenue that cuts diagonally across the city interlinking the two significant monuments; the White House and the Capitol. It was intended as a magnificent avenue, a symbol of the political dominion with the dome of the Capitol on one end and the dome of the White House on the other. However, the avenue is stopped from reaching the White House by the projection of the Treasury building. Along with that, the angle of the intersecting streets prevents it from achieving the desired monumental effect. The clarity of line of vision that is achieved in the vistas and boulevards of Rome and Paris is lost in this avenue. The built form on the

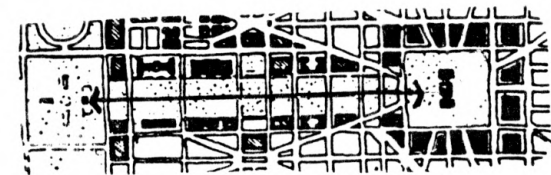
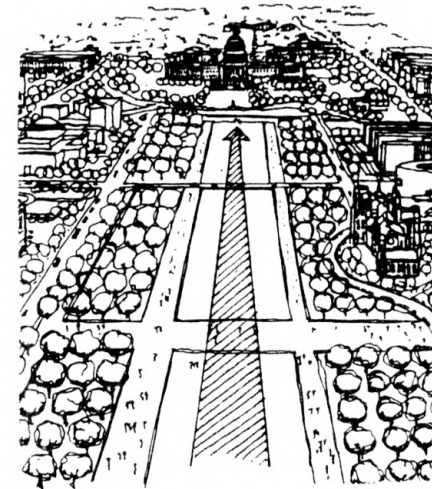


Figure 3.5 - The Mall, Washington. a) View towards the Capitol b) Plan from the Monument to the Capitol.

³⁰Kostof, Spiro. The City Shaped. Thames and Hudson. London. pp.238

avenue is too far apart to form a unified street facade. The concept of "Mall" as a wide open axial space was also introduced in the Washington plan (fig. 3.5). The Mall also bring nature into the city and has a similar function as the Tuileries garden in Paris. It is sometimes used for sponsored demonstrations by the citizens. L'Enfant called it as "The Grand Avenue" and it was originally intended for the performance of public functions. The repetition of the trivium on all four sides of the Capitol results in a distorted rond-point - reinforcing the adaptation of the European forms in the democratic society (fig. 3.6).

3.2 GATHERING

The beginning and culmination of any procession demands a grand city space for the collection of masses and performance of the rituals. The variation in the nature of processions and the representative authority in Rome, Paris and Washington resulted in transformations of this gathering place in each case.

Rome:

The papal authority in Rome, the initiator of the Baroque space, produces

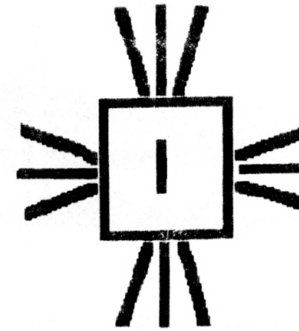


Figure 3.6 - Force lines at the Capitol square, a combination of rond-point and trivium.

the piazzas. The ceremonial piazza as an enclosed space was intended as a starting or culmination point for processions.

The Piazza del Popolo in Rome served as the entrance piazza (fig. 3.7). The intentions behind the Piazza del Popolo lie in its design as a gateway to Rome. It was a question of creating a worthy forecourt to receive the traveller entering Rome by the Porta del Popolo.³¹ The widening of the piazza after entering from the Porta del Popolo gave it a trapezoidal shape reflecting the theater ready for a show with the stage set at the entrance. The spatial setting of the piazza was thus appropriate for a performance with the entrance at Porta del Popolo and the symbolic Renaissance church of S. Maria del Popolo on one side.

In the seventeenth century the tradition of grand planning was embodied in the great papal piazzas such as Bernini's Piazza San Pietro (1656-1667), where a geometrical plan is used by the master of psychology of perception to manipulate vision, to control enormous crowds, and to recreate ancient porticoes in the form of a new theater of Christendom.³²

³¹Wittkower, Rudolf. Studies in the Italian Baroque. Thames and Hudson. London. pp.14

³²Connors, Joseph. "Borromini and Roman Urbanism". AA Files. vol.2, July 1982. p.11



Figure 3.7 - Piazza del Popolo, Rome

The piazza is a composition of a trapezoidal forecourt in front of the church of S. Peter and the oval defined by surrounding colonnade (fig. 3.8). Although the shape of the oval Piazza was the outcome of the functional demands such as visibility, processional gatherings and a direct connection to the Vatican, there was a deeper symbolism inherent in Bernini's design. He used the oval shape as a symbol of the mother church (S. Peter) embracing the whole world. The universal embrace of the church is thus a prologue to the supreme revelation.³³ The sense of enclosure represents the sacred and absolute nature of the authority. It was meant to accommodate a large group of people usually gathered for the pope's blessing. The piazza was designed to accommodate the maximum number of people and to provide maximum visibility of the Loggia which was occupied by the pope during ceremonies. The design of the piazza was thus intended to signify the papacy as representatives of God.

Paris:

Napoleon's desire to conquer the world and expand the horizons of Paris resulted in the productions of open spaces such as the "place" of Paris.

³³op. cit. Norberg- Schulz, Christian. Baroque Architecture pp.12



Figure 3.8 - Piazza S. Pietro, Rome

The "place" was a composition of a focal point and surrounding avenues such as the Place de la Concorde and the Place L'Etoile (fig. 3.9 and fig.3.10). The focal point was usually occupied by a monarchical symbol such as a statue or triumphal arch. The Place de l'Etoile was a special contribution of Haussmann, symbolizing the infinite extension and the dynamism of the Baroque space. The space was designed with the intention to accommodate the marching of troops. The Place de L'Etoile with its radiating avenues is an admirable emplacement for artillery to command the approach of threatening mobs- and was so intended.³⁴ The gathering space in Paris was more open and dynamic as compared to the piazzas in Rome - a statement of the openness to nature as well as the secular monarchical rule.

Washington:

The absence of enclosures like the piazzas and the magnificent scale of the avenues in Washington result in less integrated spaces as compared to Rome and Paris. One can associate this with the freedom of the democratic society that they represent. The Capitol Square and the Lafayette square

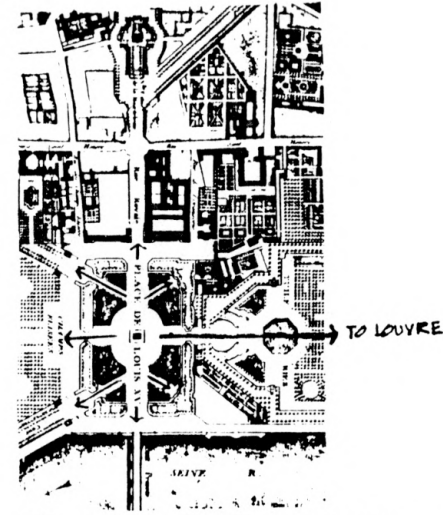


Figure 3.9 - The Place de la Concorde, Paris

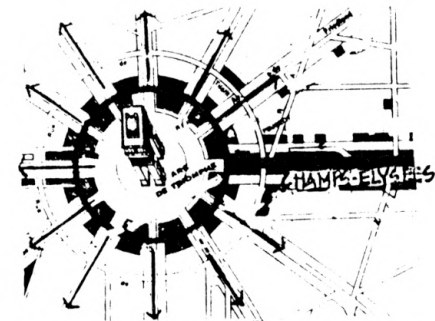


Figure 3.10 - The Place L'Etoile, Paris

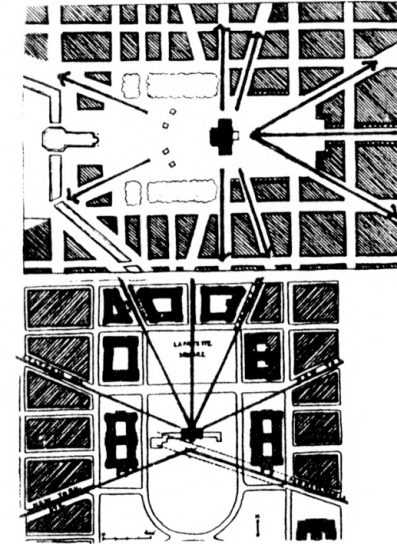
³⁴ op. cit. Mumford, Lewis. pp.114

outside the White House, both lack the precise definition of a Piazza or gathering place (fig. 3.11). The Capitol grounds are twice the size of the Piazza S. Pietro or the Place de la Concorde. This huge scale results in the loss of a defined space. The development of the gathering place is clearly not the aim of an individualistic society. The transformation of the gathering space is evident with the changing social and political context in each city.

3.3 ORIENTATION

The physical symbols such as public monuments and obelisks are used as reference points in each case. They guide the movement of the processions to the gathering place, serve as spatial integrators and themselves stand as authoritarian symbols. The symbols used for orientation are analyzed in three categories 1) those which mark the beginning of a procession such as the city gate 1) those which stand as markers on the processional routes to lead the procession such as the obelisks and 3) those that stand at the culmination point of the procession as the ultimate symbol of authority.

1) The beginning of the processional routes in the three cities is marked



**Figure 3.11 - a) The Capitol Square, Washington
b) The Lafayette Square, Washington.**

by the physical symbols of Porta del Popolo in Rome and the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. The Porta del Popolo connected to the city walls defined the boundary to the sacred world in the Holy city of Rome (fig.3.12). It served as an entry point to the city at ceremonies on the visit of ambassadors. The Arc de Triomphe in Paris is a free standing structure in the honor of unknown soldiers signifying the monarchical will to conquer and rule the world (fig. 3.13). It is the nation's gateway. To enter a city through a triumphal arch was to celebrate the myth of a transcendent regime.³⁵ In Washington, the processions begin at the President's house so it stands as a marker for the beginning of the parades but the presence of a formal entrance is missing in the city.

In the sacred city of Rome, the presence of the city -gate was an important concept that marked the boundaries. In the case of Paris, the sacred boundary is replaced by natural boundary but the metaphor of the city gate still exists celebrating the triumph of soldiers. In Washington, the idea of an entrance into the city loses its symbolic significance with development of new modes of transportation.

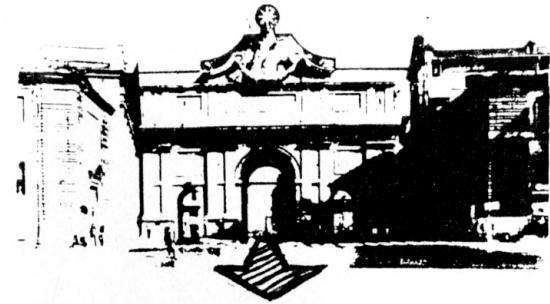


Figure 3.12 - The Porta del Popolo, Rome



Figure 3.13 - The Arc de Triomphe, Paris

³⁵ op. cit. Kostof, Spiro. pp.268

2) The obelisks on the processional routes serve as spatial integrators and allegories of the existing political context. The obelisks in the piazzas of Rome were of Egyptian origin and implied a transcendental connection. The placement of the obelisks was a ceremony in itself which highlighted the magnificence of the pope. The inscriptions on the obelisks described the ceremony and glorified the pope. The obelisk at the Piazza S. Pietro bears an inscription in praise of Pope Sixtus V who was responsible for its placement and the obelisk at the Piazza del Popolo bears a similar inscription in praise of Pope Alexander VII Chighi (fig. 3.14).

In Paris, the obelisk was less sacred and functioned more as a spatial organizer emphasizing the horizontal links of the surrounding avenues such as the one in the Place de la Concorde. The obelisk occupies the nodal point on the major East West axis and the secondary cross axis going to the church of Madeleine - an expression of regional expansion (fig. 3.15).

In Washington the obelisk (the Washington Monument) was intended to orient the spatial flow from the Capitol and the White House and for the completion of the Federal Triangle. But because of its displaced position due to site problems it does not coincide with either the Mall axis or the White House axis (fig. 3.16).

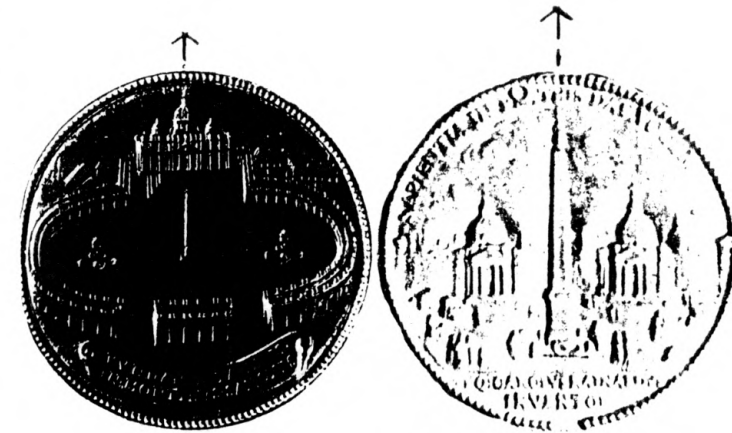


Figure 3.14 - The papal medals showing the obelisks in Rome a) Piazza del Popolo b) Piazza S. Pietro

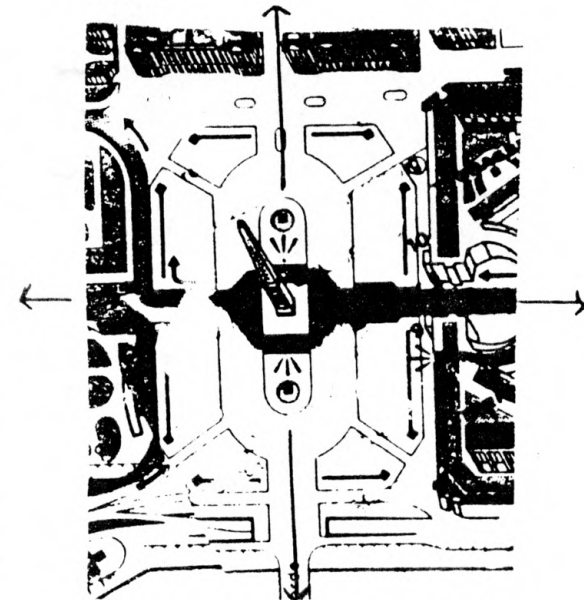


Figure 3.15 - The obelisk at Place de la Concorde, Paris

In all three cases, the obelisk is a symbol of the political power representing the pope in Rome, replacement of the statue of Louis XV in Paris and as a memorial of President Washington in Washington. The decrease in the sacredness of the central power from the papal authority to the democratic rule can be interpreted by comparing the metaphysical connection implied by the obelisk in Rome to the accessibility to the top of the obelisk (with a provision of an elevator inside the hollow structure) in Washington. The top of the obelisk with a cross in Rome represents the inaccessibility of the metaphysical authority and establishes the hierarchial position of a common man in the society. In Washington, the top of the obelisk with its accessibility to the common man represents the loss of the sacredness of authority. It expresses the possibility of an ordinary man in a position of authority in the democratic society.

3) The ultimate symbol of the papal authority in Rome is the Dome of S. Peter - an intimidating monument with a forecourt to emphasize the aura of presenting oneself before authority (fig.3.17). Its vertical axis implies the connection to god with the pope as the god's representative. The entire composition of the piazza with its elements was aimed at achieving one goal; highlighting the Church of S. Peter. The Church symbolized the eternal authority which was reflected in each detail of the piazza as well

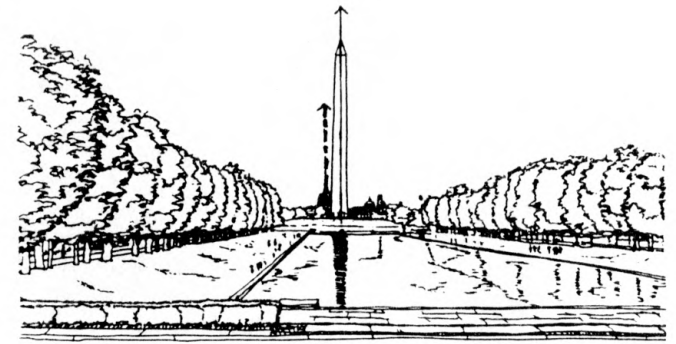
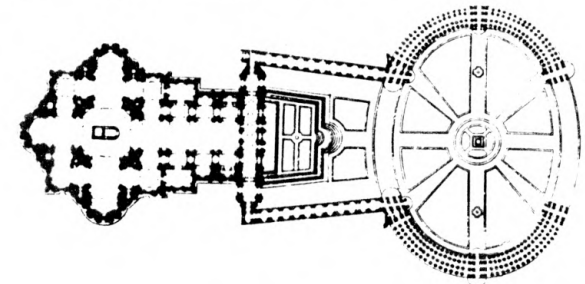


Figure 3.16 - The displaced obelisk in the Federal Triangle showing the Capitol axis at the back, Washington.



**Figure 3.17 - a) The Church of S. Peter, Rome
b) The trapezoidal forecourt.**

as the facade of the church. The central dome at the glory point, designed by Michelangelo dominated the whole composition.

In Paris, the location of the Louvre palace at the origin of axis states the monarchical jurisdiction (fig. 3.18). The spatial organization of the Tuileries with the obelisk and fountains serve as a forecourt to the king and can be compared to the forecourt of S. Peter's. However, the openness of the surroundings with the presence of gardens and avenues makes it more secular - thus indicating the secularity of the monarchical rule as compared to the sacred quality of the papal authority.

In Washington, the surrounding landscape of the Capitol emphasizes the monument but lacks the ritualistic quality of the forecourt as seen in Rome and Paris - which is a reflection of the decreasing aura surrounding the central authority (fig. 3.19). The facade is monumental in scale with the magnificent copper sheathed wooden dome on the top. The mass and scale of the Capitol along with its location as " the center of a star of avenues"³⁶ results in a dominant form that signifies its role of administering the whole city and country.

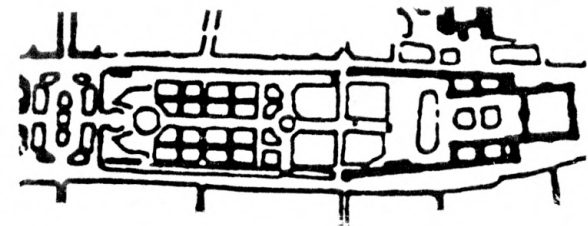
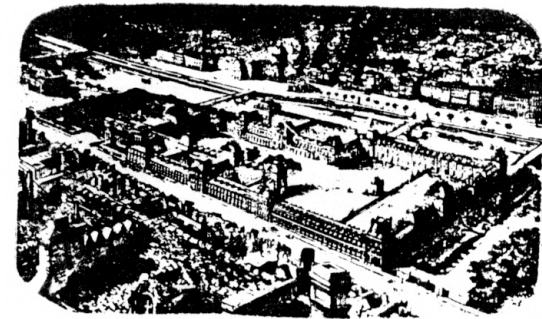


Figure 3.18 - a) The Louvre, Paris b) The Tuileries gardens as forecourt.

³⁶op.cit. Spreiegen, Paul (Ed.) pp.43

The underlying purpose behind this physical manifestation in the form of axial spaces and symbolic monuments is embedded in the political nature in each city. The assurance and finality of the Baroque forms corresponds to the power of the central authority in each case.

Typically, behind designs in the Grand Manner stands a powerful, centrist state whose resources and undiluted authority make possible the extravagant urban vision of ramrod straight avenues, vast uniformly bordered squares, and a suitable accompaniment of monumental public buildings. This is, in fact, a public urbanism. It speaks of ceremony, processional intentions, a regimented public life. The street holds the promise of pomp: it traverses the city with single-minded purpose and sports accessories like triumphal arches, obelisks and freestanding fountains. All this architectural drama subsumes the untidiness of our common routines. Shielded by the spacious envelopes, most of us continue to manage our plain existence, ready to gather into attendant crowds when the high business of the Grand Manner city needs its popular complement.³⁷

The Baroque spatial forms of Rome, Paris and Washington are designed as stage settings for the performance of the processions related to the socio-political lifestyle in each city. The nature of the processions and ceremonies that give life to the axial core are evaluated in the next chapter.

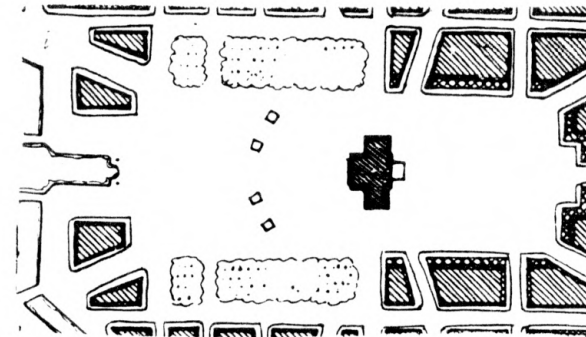


Figure 3.19 - a) The Capitol, Washington b) The landscaped forecourt.

³⁷op. cit. Kostof, Spiro, pp.240

CHAPTER 4: SYMBOLS AND THEIR SYMBOLIC REFERENCE - Formal Public Activities.

4.1 THE IDEA OF POWER

The necessity of continuing the processional events lies in the ideology to perpetuate power. The most effective way to express power resides in collective gatherings that involve the masses. The persistence of these traditional gatherings that are incorporated in the lifestyle of people reinforce the power. The recurrence of these ceremonies contribute to the history of their spatial settings and it is the stories of celebration and victories that glorify the power and the recollection of these authentic, common experiences that establish a belief of the authority in people's hearts. The participation of the masses in these events induces a sense of belonging and is a source of identity for the individual. The political authorities in Rome, Paris and Washington, despite being of different natures, recognized the need for exhibiting power in this manner. The public rituals of processions, parades, coronations and festivities have always symbolized the presence of a supreme authority through time. Whether it be the papal ceremony crowning the pope, the coronation of a king or the swearing-in ceremony of a president; the ceremonial activities

are always aimed to highlight the "power" behind the show.

As the political center of any complexly organized society, there is both a governing elite and a set of symbolic forms expressing the fact that it is in truth governing. No matter how democratically the members of the elite are chosen or how deeply divided among themselves they may be, they justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities and appurtenances that they have either inherited or in more revolutionary terms invented. It is these - crowns and coronations, limousines and conferences - that mark the center as center and give what goes on there its aura of being not merely important but in some odd fashion connected with the way the world is built.³⁸

Hence it is the ceremonies associated with the city spaces that give meaning to the city by associating the inhabitants with a set of experiences that establish their hierarchial identity in the socio-political setup. The origin of these ceremonies can be traced back to the Roman times as the early church adapted rituals similar to the Roman state ceremony. Although this expression of power through ceremonies and rituals

³⁸Geertz, Clifford. *Local Knowledge. Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. Basic Books Inc., Publishers. NY 1983

originated in classical times and one also finds the origin of Baroque elements in the Roman statues, fountains (nymphae) and temple fronts, it was only in the Baroque period that the whole city structure was planned for this purpose. This was the basic dogma for urban design in the Baroque age. In the design of these cities, the parade became not merely the core but the very reason for existence of a new kind of city.³⁹

Joseph Rykwert interprets the meaning of a town in terms of these rituals and ceremonies.⁴⁰ This symbolism of power that is implicit in the processions has been studied by Clifford Geertz and he has demonstrated the inseparable aspect of the spatial and ideological dimensions of power. His studies show that the geographical, political and symbolic centers of a nation occupy the same space, each reinforcing the other.⁴¹ The recurrence of public processions in a specific location of the city indicates the symbolic significance of that geographical center. This chapter

³⁹op.cit. Mumford, Lewis. The Culture of Cities.

⁴⁰I have been concerned to show the town as a total mnemonic symbol or at any rate a structural complex of symbols; in which citizen; through a number of bodily exercises such as processions, seasonal festivals, sacrifices, identifies himself with his town, with its past and its founders." Rykwert, Joseph. Idea of a Town. pp.189

⁴¹Avner Ben-Amos. "The Sacred Center Power: Paris and Republican State funerals." Journal of Interdisciplinary History. XII (Summer 1991) pp.29

describes the implementation of political power through the recurrence of public ceremonies in the specific processional routes described in chapter three. It compares the nature of formal public events that gave life to the dynamic core in each city.

It seems probable that in any ceremonial which has lasted through many epochs, the symbolic interpretation so far as we can obtain it, varies much more rapidly than does the actual ceremonial. Also in its flux a symbol will have different meanings for different people.⁴²

In the three cities of Rome, Paris and Washington, the meaning of formal events has a different interpretation with changing nature of the authority. The parades and processions in each city are diverse in their nature, satisfying the demands and expressions of the socio-political milieu that existed in each case. Despite their diverse nature, these formal public activities through the centuries in these three cities can be classified in two main categories - those symbolizing the entry of some significant personality which include the entry ceremonies of the ambassadors, coronations of the popes, coronations of the kings and inaugural processions of the presidents; the others symbolizing the exit of a

⁴² op. cit. Whitehead. pp.75

significant personality from the city which includes the funeral processions of the pope, king or the president. Besides these, the ceremonies performed as celebrations of festivals in each context also aimed to enhance the power of the ruling authority.

4.2 NATURE OF CEREMONIES

ENTRY CEREMONIES

The ceremonies classified in this category include the entry of significant personalities (foreign ambassadors) in the city as well as the inauguration of the pope, coronation of the king and inauguration of the president which marked the beginning of a new regime in the city. The entry ceremonies were thus a recognition and acceptance of the new authority within the city.

Rome:

The Piazza del Popolo was the place for the performance of the entry ceremonies in the city of Rome. . Bernini was commissioned to redesign the Porta del Popolo for the visit of Queen Christina (fig. 4.1). Besides

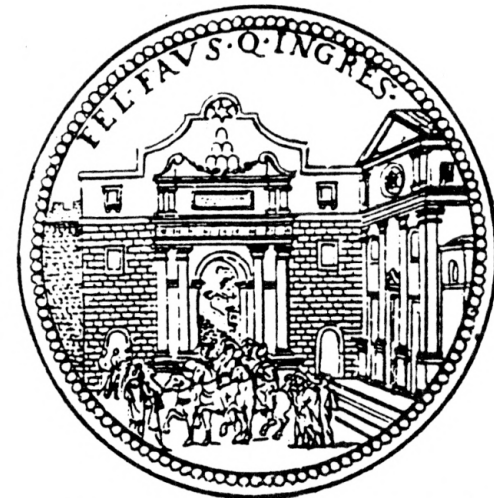


Figure 4.1 - The Entrance ceremony of Queen Christina at Porta del Popolo, 1665, Rome

the entry ceremonies to welcome foreign ambassadors these axial avenues and piazzas were also used for the entry and departure ceremonies of the Pope during his itineraries. The ritual for papal entries into cities has been described by Bonner Mitchell.⁴³ The pope was greeted by a group of costumed men at the gate and was offered the keys to the city thus symbolizing the subordination of the masses.

Another ceremony was the inaugural parade known as the "Possesso" held in the honor of the new pope taking possession of Rome and the lands of the church. This event was marked by a triumphal parade with grandiose decorations. The parade was constituted of civic officials, barons and diplomats which further emphasized the imposition of power. The traditional ceremony started at St. Peter's and moved through the Borgho to Castel S. Angelo. "Obedientia" was another ceremony that reflected the acceptance of papal authority by the rest of the world including the monarchs.

As the ritual focus of European Christianity, the pope alone of all ruling monarchs was honored with the "Obedientia" ceremony. Emperors, princes, prelates and those of sufficient rank had the



Figure 4.2 - The consecrated host preceding the papal party on the journey from Rome to Ferrara.

⁴³ Mitchell, Bonner. "A Papal Progress in 1598". Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University, Volume VI 1990

privilege and duty to pay homage to the pope by kissing his foot.⁴⁴

Paris:

In Paris, the royal entry ceremonies were more popular in the early centuries at the time of Louis XVII and were quite rare in the later period.

The triumphal entry of Louis XIV was celebrated for three days (fig. 4.3). The tradition of welcoming ambassadors to the city still persisted. The processional route for the visit of Cardinal Chighi from Rome (1664) and for the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Consort (1855) passed through the Arch of Triumph down the Champs Elysses and the Place de la Concorde establishing this geographical center of the city as the ideological one. The celebrations were also held at the Tuileries such as the imperial levee a day after the proclamation of Napoleon as an Emperor.



Figure 4.3 Ceremony at the Louvre, Paris

⁴⁴Ingersoll, Richard Joseph. "The Ritual Use of Public Space in Renaissance Rome." Ph. D. Dissertation. University of California. Berkeley. 1985. pp.48

Washington:

In Washington, despite the absence of a city gate or triumphal arch on the Avenue, the old European tradition of welcoming a distinctive personality in the city was not forgotten. In 1824, on the visit of Marquis de Lafayette, an arch was specially erected at the entrance of the Capitol grounds by a few ladies - a nostalgic evocation of the European processional tradition. Lincoln was welcomed into the city in 1861 and crowds gathered on the avenue to receive him (fig. 4.4). The inaugural ceremonies of the President were also elaborate, declaring his position as the head of the nation.. The nation's first inaugural parade on the avenue in 1805 was the second inauguration of Thomas Jefferson. The oath taking ceremony was performed at the Capitol Square and the inaugural processions moved down the Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House. The hierarchy of this procession is maintained to this day with the delegates from the President's state leading the parade. They are followed by the Mayor of the district of Columbia as the host in the Capital and the rest of the states. The Inaugural processions became more elaborate each time and the scale of the parade also increased with each inauguration.



Figure 4.4 The inaugural procession of President Lincoln, Washington

EXIT CEREMONIES

The completion of a political term was marked by the death of the pope, king or president. So the funeral ceremonies were significant in expressing the grief of the masses on such an event.

Rome:

The funeral ceremony of the popes were also most elaborate. The procession started from the Sistine chapel and culminated in S. Peter (fig. 4.5). People of Rome were allowed to pass before the body in the Sistine Chapel. Numerous funeral masses were held in the deceased pope's memory in preparation for the final and grandest service to be conducted in the open air of S. Peter's piazza.

Paris:

The funeral ceremonies of the royal family were the most heralded of events in Paris. They were religious in character with prayers for the dead and immortality of the deceased soul. The hierarchy of the procession was to be maintained throughout. These were important facet of Baroque



Figure 4.5 - Funeral procession of pope, Rome

expression, calling forth all that oratory or design or sculpture was capable of devising.⁴⁵ The processional routes designed by Haussmann held significance even in the later centuries and were used for the elaborate state funerals at the time of the Republicans. The arteries usually used for funeral processions that connected the monuments were created by Haussmann. The most important part of the ceremony, the procession, was a linear and hierarchial phenomenon. It consisted of four components: 1) the hearse; 2) the family; 3) state, army, and church officials; and 4) delegations of various popular societies and organizations that were associated with the deceased. These processional routes were framed with decorations for the specific ceremonies. The decorations consisted of a living fence created on both sides of the street, lamps along the route and mourning flags for the funeral ceremonies. These elements transformed the everyday spaces into an extraordinary environment. The State funerals of the French Third Republic were events in which three sacred factors interacted: the central republican values, the immobile center of Paris, and the mobile coffin of a great man, which was the center of procession.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Trout, Andrew. "Louis XIV's Paris. Government and Ceremony. History Today. (Great Britain) 1977. 27 (1). pp.19

⁴⁶op. cit. Avner Ben-Amos. pp.47

Washington:

Even the funeral ceremonies observed in the European society made their way into the democratic country. A grand funeral attended by high officials and diplomats was observed in Washington in case of the death of any congressman while he was in office. The funeral processions of men of eminent standards proceeded along the ceremonial way between the Capitol and the White House. There was a definite hierarchy inherent in the procession (See Appendix).

The Avenue had its first presidential funeral procession in 1844. It was so long that when the front reached the congressional cemetery, the rear had not left the White House. The most spectacular funeral procession was observed at the time of Kennedy's death (fig.4.6). It was traditional and reminiscent of the older ones. The body was put in the same caisson which had been used for Lincoln in 1865, Garfield in 1881 and Roosevelt in 1945 - symbolizing the persistence of the traditions. The caisson was escorted by an honor guard as the procession rolled down the avenue from the White House to the Capitol and than to the cathedral.



Figure 4.6 - Funeral procession of President Kennedy, Washington

CELEBRATIONS

Rome:

The celebrations during the public festivities in each city also incorporated the dialectic function of exercising political influence. The Corpus Christi procession was the clearest manifestation of the desired order of society according to papal ideology⁴⁷. It was a ceremony to honor the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and the procession for this ceremony was confined to the Borgho. This procession of Corpus Christi served to emphasize the solidarity of the Pope. At Easter, Rome had one of the greatest feasts at the Vatican and a papal procession entered into St. Peter's to attend the mass by the pope. A few other processions can be identified as the papal cavalcade, the carnival parade, confraternity events and pilgrim's route to station churches. In Rome, the ceremonies were given a more precise codification showing changes mostly in scale and pomp, and they coincided with the historical process of strengthening the papal monarchy.⁴⁸

⁴⁷op. cit. Ingersoll, Richard-Joseph. pp.139

⁴⁸ibid. pp.26



Figure 4.7 - Ceremony at S. Peter. Rome

In case of a papal cavalcade , the Pope was in the leading position and the cardinals followed behind in pairs. In a typical papal procession, the Pope was positioned very near the end, followed by a few of his "famiglia" and an honor guard. What would strike the viewer was a sense of a build up, with a thickening around the pope, where the ritual objects were accumulated and extra people were needed to hold the baladachin, the vertical accent that marked the position of the most powerful. When the hierarchial order was taken into account, the procession became a representation of political ideology; a program of power⁴⁹.

Paris:

No Western nation has been more self-conscious - some might say pompous - in the propagation of political rituals and symbols than France.⁵⁰ Most of the ceremonies of the Renaissance times were modified in the Baroque period incorporating a militaristic touch to exhibit the power of the second empire.

The Champs- Elysees was used for the celebration of July 14 as the annual commemoration of the regime and for the Bicentennial celebration

⁴⁹ibid. pp.97

⁵⁰op. cit. Geertz, Clifford .pp.3

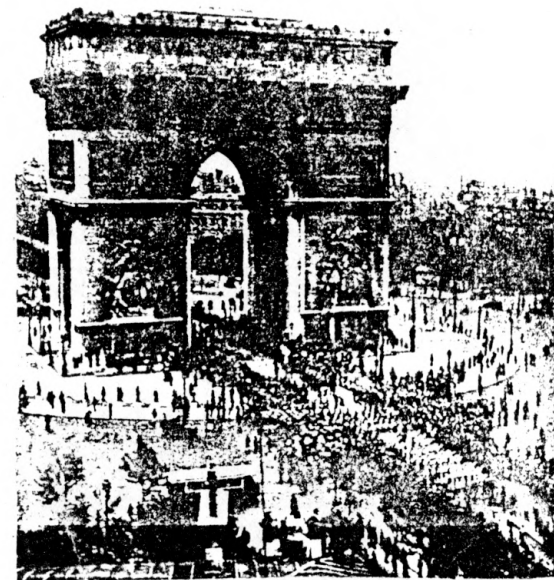


Figure 4.8· Celebrations under the Arc de Triomphe, Paris

of the city and for the Victory March of allies in the early autumn of 1919.

Washington:

Amongst the celebrations in Washington, the greatest parade on Pennsylvania avenue took place after the end of the civil war for several days with the troops marching westward along the Avenue in front of the White House. The parades down the Pennsylvania Avenue had an official agenda and most of them glorified the head of the democracy with the President as the focus in each presidential parade. But it also had the flexibility of the democratic society where the events associated with the masses such as the women's suffragists march in 1913 and Martin Luther King's protest in 1966 were also exhibited.

The specific nature of power and its symbolism in each case results in the variations in public activities as well as their spatial setting. The power of the pope in Rome was metaphysical and transcendental as he was next to the authority of god. The power was manifested by playing on the sacred emotions of the masses. An environment of awe created through ceremonies and urban settings surrounded the pope. The monarchical power in Paris was more emphatic about the law and order as enforced by



Figure 4.9 - Parade on the Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington

the monarch. It was expressed as the will of the monarch to conquer and control. It was more direct and secular, enforced by the intimidating military rule. Hence the nature of rituals in the two cases is remarkably different. The pilgrim processions in Rome moved slowly with an aura around the pope in the center. The processions of Paris implied a more dynamic quality with the marching of troops, the neat row of soldiers exhibited an indefiable sense of order that was a contrast from the less formal processions of Rome. The democratic power in Washington represented the virtues of freedom and liberty, at the same time emphasizing the role of the President as people's representative. The processions although formal as in the Parisian environment were less intimidating as the marching of troops reflected the nation's will to serve and protect the people rather than a desire to rule by force. The ceremonies were more elaborate in Rome lasting for several days as compared to Washington where the ceremonies lasted only for a day. Whatever the variations, there is no doubt that the ceremonies in each political context announce the strength of the political authority and symbolize the power behind the functioning of the city. They form the programmatic grounds for the urban setting in each city.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The study of political symbolism in the three city forms of Rome, Paris and Washington reinforces the strong relationship between symbolism and power as stated by Geertz and Kertzer (refer chapter 1). It also establishes that the Baroque city form always had its roots in strong political strategies. The study of symbolism of the city form in the three cases exhibits the universal ideologies for projecting power. The meaning transforms from the metaphysical power in Rome as an introvert city with major axis in the sacred dimension pointing to God as the ultimate authority, into a more secular power in Paris with its major axis extending into infinity and symbolizing the monarchial desire to reach out and conquer the world, and is lost in Washington where the city form spreads out and merges with its surroundings reflecting an age of anarchy. The absolute nature of the city form recedes from Rome to Washington representing the loss of authority from papal to monarchial and presidential rule. This is also evident with the presence of the sacred boundary of the city wall in Rome which opens out to meet nature in case of Paris and completely disappears in Washington, where the city spaces are a synthesis of the rural and urban forms (Fig. 5.1).

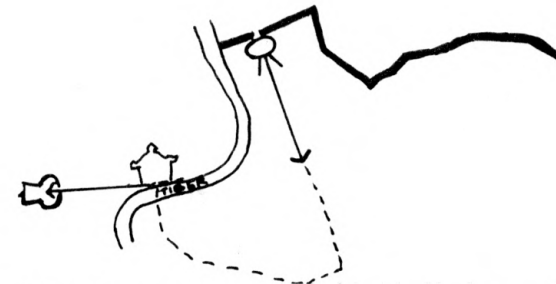
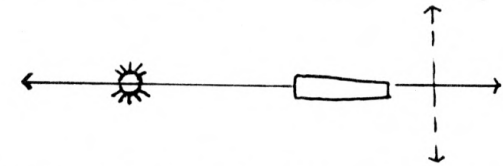
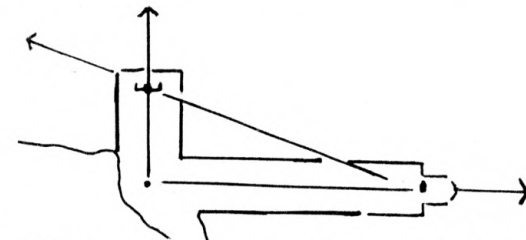


Figure 5.1 - a) Rome: Presence of city wall. The nodal points- represent entry into the city and destination of the pilgrim. Sacred city where the pope is the authority.



b) Paris: The axis breaks through the city wall to extend out to the countryside. The Louvre is at the center with axes radiating out in all directions expressing the monarch's desire to conquer the world. City reaching out to nature



c) Washington: Central core with the White House and the Capitol symbolizing democracy. The axes extend outside the city from this central core. Spaces are synthesis of the rural and the urban.

The study of symbols in the axial core which is the physical and metaphysical governing element for future development of the city, gives an insight into the manifestation of political power in each case.

The transformation of the spatial symbols in the axial core is a response to the processional experiences of movement, gathering and orientation in each case. Figure 5.2 illustrates the changing nature of spaces in the three cities with different socio-political milieu. The processional activities in each case resulted in corresponding spatial setting : 1) the linear space designed for movement 2) the nodal space designed for gatherings and 3) the visual connectors of these spaces that direct the movement of the eye towards the gathering space. These three elements integrate to define the dynamic quality of the Baroque space, where notion of movement is primary. It also expresses the development of the Baroque space with science as the qualities of dynamism and naturalism came with new ideas such as Galileo's telescope and concepts of infinity.

The public activities also served as symbols for manifesting the political authority - an ideology that persisted from the Christian ceremonies since Roman times. The intention was to express power by collective gatherings that involves the masses and focus on the central power. The processions

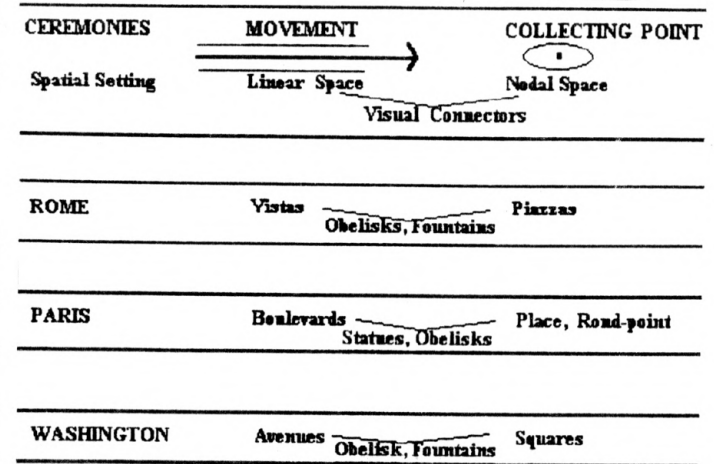


Figure 5.2 - Transformation of axial spaces.

included celebrations of inaugurals, funerals and festivals. The processions of Paris had a more dynamic quality with the marching of troops as compared to the pilgrim processions of Rome as the neat row of soldiers exhibited sense of order that was a contrast from the less formal processions of Rome. The processions in Washington although formal as in the Parisian environment were less intimidating as the marching of troops reflected the nation's will to serve and protect the people rather than a desire to rule by force. The ceremonies in each political context announced the strength of the political authority and symbolize the central power.

The comparative analysis of the symbolic axial core in the three cities authenticates the strength of the city form as a symbol of power; the variations of the form in three different contexts confirm its versatility and the analysis of axial core in each city also proves that the theatrical impact of the monumental Baroque spaces acquires its meaning by dialogue with the social element. The symbiosis between the ceremonial behavior and spatial setting is revealed in the three cities of Rome, Paris and Washington.

This research provides an insight into the symbolic workings of the city form and is useful in evaluating its validity in the present situation. The city spaces in Rome and Paris mark the beginning of new concepts of motion and extension that gave rise to an urban system which laid the foundations for the designs of capital cities all over the world. The use of this form in the plans of Versailles, Berlin, Karlsruhe, London and New Delhi signifies its universal applicability as a national symbol. Further research regarding the application of this form by urban designers will provide useful information. Washington is an ideal example of contemporary adaptation of this city form and is most parallel to the present situation. The interesting concept in its application here resides in the contradiction between the city form and political theory. The absolute formal characteristics from Rome and Washington are adapted to the societal values of freedom and liberty. When compared to Rome and Paris the spaces in Washington seem too massive in scale, lack a sense of place and they merely represent the nostalgia for European values. But in the context of the country, the city form still stands as a symbol of the nation. The image of the city is related to the Capitol and President's house and evokes the democratic values in the mind of any American citizen. The experiential dimension of participating in processional activities in Baroque cities was slowly replaced in

Washington by the indirect involvement of individuals watching the presidential processions on television. The mode of participation itself reduces the impact of the authority. This portrays the present condition of the society where the definition of power and authority is in question. The massive distance that one experiences from the White House to the Capitol reduces when the processions are observed on television and the avenue can be perceived as originally intended. This implies the tautology of the Baroque reality (?) with cultural development.

The present dilemma of individualism and pluralism wars with the need for collective expression and absolute power. Although the present growth of cities contradicts the holistic ideas of urban design yet the need to control this chaotic situation persists. The Baroque city form is an interesting example where the basic human desires for collective expression and power are symbolically interwoven with the social system and spatial structure of the city. The city form provides insights in dealing with the present crisis of suburban trends as the axial extensions of the city core gives direction for future growth. It also solves the present problem of spacelessness by introducing monumental spaces in the city core that give an identity to the city. But again, one needs to inquire into the meaning of such spaces as the meaning of collective gathering is

lost in the capitalist and consumerist society. In the present condition, one can contemplate the use of this city form in two possible situations 1) if the needs of the individual is subjugated by the need for collective expression, that is the possibility of return of the age of absolute authority 2) small scale application of this form in the pluralistic society by adapting useful elements from the city form. In either case, the Baroque network pattern will help in developing an individual and comprehensive linguistics of the city and has scope for further investigation.

APPENDIX

This appendix contains a description of a few events performed in the cities of Rome, Paris and Washington.

Rome:

There was a grand entry ceremony at the entrance of Queen Christian on December 22, 1655 at the Piazza del Popolo. The entry ceremonies after the development of the Piazza del Popolo by Alexander VIII included the welcome of John Milton in 1634 by Popoe Barberini, the welcome of the young Margrave of Bradenburg -Bay -Reuth on his tour in 1660-61 and the visit of the Duke of Brunswick-Bevern an year later.

A significant ceremony at the Piazza S. Peter was the "purification" that was celebrated forty days after Christmas. The ceremony started with a procession to the altar of the Sistine chapel that contained candles for distribution to the people who had access to the papal mass. It was ended by another procession to the Loggia, where the candles were thrown to the crowd in the piazza of St. Peter's. This ceremony later became a theatrical event using the Loggia as a stage for the candle-seekers. Another classification of processions, the carnival parades were also performed on the Via del Corso.

Paris:

Amongst the notable ceremonies in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century is the occasion of marriage of Dauphin to Marie Antoinette in 1770. The two most humiliating marches through the Arch of Triumph for the Parisians include the march of

the allied armies after Waterloo on the Place de la Concorde in 1815, and the march of the conquering Germans down the avenue in 1871. These memories were erased by the Victory March of allies through Napoleon's Arch along the tree lined avenue in the early autumn of 1919.

Washington:

The visit of Marquis de Lafayette in 1842 is recorded as one of the memorable parades of the Avenue. A brief description of the parade is:

On the morning of October 12, Lafayette was escorted into the city by cavalry troops and revolutionary veterans met at the 'elegant and tasty arch' by twenty four young ladies in a chariot. Each have a white muslin scarf and a wreath of red roses and bore a banner emblazoned with the name of one of the twenty four states. One of George Washington's tents had been set up in the Rotunda, and the Marquis was escorted through it to Eastern portico. There in view of a dense crowd, speeches were exchanged and a 78 line poem read in honor of "the national guest". After a gun salute and a review of troops, the guest entered his carriage and proceeded along the avenue bound for the president's house. According to the "Intelligencer" the most pleasing sight was the windows on each side of the Avenue filled with ladies in their best attire and looks, bestowing with beaming eyes their benediction on the beloved chief and waving white handkerchiefs as tokens of their happiness.¹

¹Cable, Mary. The Avenue of the President. Houghton Mifflin. 1969

The first parade on the Avenue after its renewal was an unusual one. It consisted of Washington businessmen dressed in old continental uniforms or in frontier clothes combined with Quaker hats, and carried brooms for guns. On reaching the White House, the paraders shot at it with popguns. The period of President Tyler and the first lady Mrs. Tyler enjoyed her position driving down the Avenue drawn by four expensive horses. The civil war put a stop to the processions and during that period the usual sight was the troops marching down the Avenue. A great crowd paraded up the Avenue on July 5, 1864 after hearing the fall of Vicksburg. The March and April of 1865 were two most eventful months in the history of Washington. In March, a grand parade was held on the taking of Richmond. On April 13, 1865 the people celebrated Lee's surrender. Lincoln addressed the people lined up on the Avenue from a window of the White House. The greatest parade on Pennsylvania Avenue took place after the end of civil war for several days starting on the morning of May 23, 1865. All that day the troops marched westward along the avenue in front of the White House. The hierarchy of the funeral processions in Washington is as follows:

The order was :

Magnificent Distances

Chaplains of both Houses

Physicians who attended the deceased

Committee of arrangement

THE BODY (Pall borne by 6 members)

The relations of the deceased, with the senators and republic of the state to which he belonged as mourners.

Sergeant at arms of the House of Representatives

The House of Representatives

Their Speaker and Clerk preceding

The Senate of the United States

The Vice President and Secretary

THE PRESIDENT²

²Cable, Mary. The Avenue of the President. Houghton Mifflin. 1969

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