

Free research paper about culture and architecture

[Parts of the World](#), [Europe](#)



Arnold Cameron in his article the Culture of Slovenia mentioned that with the use of architecture it has been possible for outsiders to gauge many elements of a country's culture such as its lifestyle, sensibilities in terms of the arts and humanities and even its social structure. Giving the famous Indian structure, the Taj Mahal, as an example Cameron (p. 6) shared that was the structure designed as it is just to merely look like other buildings or was it build in such manner because of the country's culture? Another example is the great pyramids of Egypt that throughout reflects the power and social structure of the country. Varied architecture can strike inspiration from the rich and vast cultural and history of countries. Every culture can move types of architecture that can be seen in landmarks to common homes. Both religion and family values usually serve as the most influential factors in architecture (Kusno p. 1). Each country has its own set of unique culture and the more people know about these traditions the more they understand the story and logic behind the structures.

When the word culture was introduced to the European vocabulary, the word still contained most of its original meaning *cultura animi* or the cultivation of the soul. However due to the progress of times the description of culture also evolved and diversified and one of the expansion to the connotation of culture includes architecture. The buildings around the world signal the relationship between architecture, society and its culture and how it is constantly evolving. The basic characteristics of architecture such as the size and prominence allude to the central notion of creativity is now banner modern and urban economies to the point that the entire cities are changing their definition of power attraction (Baydar p. 9).

Architecture around the World

Cameron (p. 8) focused on the example of Slovenia to prove his point on how architecture serves as the mirror of a nation's cultural identity. He added that when Slovenia gained its independence in 1991 after being under the ruling of Yugoslavia, the country went on to become one of the most recognized nations for its economical progress after being freed from Europe. The efforts of the country is reflected through its efforts to modernize its infrastructures such as the factories but still managed to preserve its traditional identity because the center of their town is still labeled as the older parts of the city. The landscape of the towns' lifestyle focuses in the squares that contain both the marketplace and churches. As a growing country, the Slovenian towns have a lot of well-preserved buildings that have styles of architecture that dates back even as old as 1100 (Cameron p. 8). Some of the churches in the town such as the Sticna Abbey and Podsreda Castle are good embodiment of the Roman architecture. Other styles that influenced the country are the Italian Baroque styles that even today are considered as treasures of the country in terms of architecture. Using the example of Cameron for Slovenia, it can be inferred that architecture may not always be described as grand and breathtaking sometimes it can also serve as a reflection of the simplicity of the nation. Simple homes made from mud for centuries have been a staple for some countries. Some of the parts of the house such as the roof could be used for an oven but some of the newer homes are now being built from bricks. A good example of the integration of modernization is the country of Egypt where new homes are being constructed from bricks which are considered

more expensive compared to muds but stronger. Without a doubt culture, has brought about both the tradition and social identities of countries. In Muslim countries, each village contains at least one mosque for the villagers to be able to practice their religious obligations. Churches are founded to host large amount of people where others can gather not just to worship but also to socialize. Cairo, the capital of Egypt, is said to be modeled after Paris, France but despite its European flavor the country has still managed to preserve the old heart of Egypt built with Islamic and Coptic monuments.

The Chinese Architectural Influence

Another good example is the Chinese Architecture which arguably has to most cultural influence. Looking at Chinese architecture, traditionally buildings were crafted for its width and not defined by height. It can be observed that important infrastructures are encapsulated by large walls to serve as protection for the important people inside the structure and also the assets inside the building. Ordinary homes are characterized as dull and grey while palaces are vibrant and considered as a celebration of color. Imperial buildings, for example, have golden or strong red roofs decorated by red columns and doors. Two of the most powerful influencer of Chinese architecture are religion and tradition. As observed most of the home has their entrance at the front and facing the east with a screen due to the Chinese belief that spirits travel straight and cannot pass through a screen. The main buildings of Chinese architecture face the courtyard and the children's rooms are situated on the sides of the homes. The rationale behind the belief of the south-facing the entrance is to avoid the north winds and to attract more sunshine during the winter season. Styles of the Chines

ancient architecture are varied and rich such as temples, altars, pavilions and imperial palaces. These mentioned structures reflect the harmonious relationship between nature and humanity. In the tradition of China, people practice moderation in most of the things they do and people do not put a strong emphasis on self-expression but usually wants to portray modesty and gentleness.

In Chinese architecture, the reflection of the spirits of modesty and gentleness are reflected in the pursuit of connotation and sense. The façade of Chinese architectures is decorated by simple walls that cannot catch the eyes of the onlookers but when people walk inside they will immediately be awed by the interior of the temples. The interior unravels itself to the patient people who walked inside. An example of Chinese Architecture is the Paifang (or arch when translated in English) which is a either a stone or wooden archway crafted mainly to commemorate the noteworthy achievements of family's ancestors. The Paifang is usually built in front of tombs, memorials and ancestral houses (Travel China Guide).

The European Architecture

Ireland, dubbed as the first European country to allowed commoners to purchase land in today's context is characterized by its farm lands. The Irish towns serve as a general symbol of the people who fought for the country's independence. As far as the monuments, statues, museums and landscaping are concerned they are the reflection of the country's patriots. Common buildings such as the residential and commercial establishments resemble structures from the British Isle and even Northern Europe. The general

characteristic of Irish architecture is narrow because of the strong family ties that banner the Irish tradition.

The Cultural Connection of Architecture

The use of architecture can be defined by its sphere of operation as the construction of objects that are usually identified and understood in private that is why it is usually involve in the definition of cultural identity. The presence of architecture can be argued to be cultural in nature because of its ability to capture the richness in the identity of a nation through its creative interpretation. With the affirmation of the presence of the cultural integration, architecture transcends beyond its technical duty (del Rio p. 4) . It goes beyond the construction side of society but also aids in the preservation of the national heritage. To some architecture may only be valuable in reduction with it be simply economic or cultural, but the contribution of architecture to both elements are unparalleled. Culture and architecture are tightly interrelated. In some sense architecture can be considered as the carrier of culture (Baydar, p 19).

The impact of Architecture can go beyond the present time and inspire more people to serve and preserve their cultural identities. The sizes, height and colors used in infrastructures serve as the celebration of life and culture of nations. That is why there are nations who are very strong in their efforts to preserve their architectural practice not only preserve the practice but to make the present and future generation experience the authenticity of their cultures. Even with the introduction of modernization it is still good to see countries with conscious efforts of striking balance between tradition and progress. Some writers and researchers would mention that a good way to

understand the history, present and future of a country is through observing and appreciating their structures. These structures are good implication of the direction the country is travelling (Garcia p. 3).

Works cited:

Baydar, Gülsüm. The Cultural Burden of Architecture. The Journal of Architectural Education Vol 57 Issue 4 2004. Print

Cameron, Arnold. Culture of Slovenia. Web. 12 Jul 2015. <http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Slovenia.html>

Del Rio, Vicente. Urban design and conflicting city images of Brazil. Web. 12 Jul 2015. http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=crp_fac

Garcia, Ben. KUWAITOLOGY: Translating Kuwaiti behaviors into urban design. Web. 12 Jul 2015. <http://www.iar.ubc.ca/centres/csear/webpage/4-kusno.pdf>

Kusno, Abidin. Back to the City A Note on Urban Architecture in the New Indonesia. Web. 12 Jul 2015. <http://www.iar.ubc.ca/centres/csear/webpage/4-kusno.pdf>

Travel China Guide. Chinese Architecture Culture. Web. 12 Jul 2015. <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/architecture/culture/>