

JKWIS Block2 Essay

Nada High School, Japan
Ryosuke Takashima
Kohsuke Tanigawa

To begin, we will start by defining the words “art” and “culture”. From *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the original meaning of the word “art” was “Skill: its display and application” and one of its present meanings “Skillful, crafty or artificial conduct” came from this original meaning. From this, we will define two different types of art in this essay; as art-1 and art-2. The former as “A pursuit or occupation where skill is directed towards the gratification of taste or production of what is beautiful” and the latter as “A practical application of any science: a body or system of rules serving to facilitate the carrying out of certain principles”.

Culture’s original meaning was “The action or practice of cultivating the soil” and this meaning leads to the modern meaning, “the training, development, and refinement of mind, tastes, and manners; the intellectual side of civilization”, and we will define it thus.

Our conclusion is that architecture reflects prevailing art and culture almost perfectly, except for the interference of patrons and other social restrictions. This below is our argument.

Firstly, it can be said from the original and current meanings of the word “culture” that culture is born from the daily activities of humans of that age, as in the introduction of practical steel-frame buildings that consist of steel frames, reinforced concrete, glass, and lightweight panels, and are divided into rooms by thin partitions. This was the ideal design for industrialists who wanted to have offices in the cramped center of cities as the result of focus on commerce and urbanization.



Thought is also included in this “culture”, and it has a significant influence on the designs and purposes of architects. This can be seen in Renaissance architecture which was under the strong influence of classicism in the Renaissance period. Represented by the dome of *Florence Cathedral* by *Filippo Brunelleschi*, which was made by studying the structure of Rome's *Pantheon*. These “thoughts” and the purpose of the buildings that architects are trying to build lead to art-1, the design of the buildings.



Rome's Pantheon

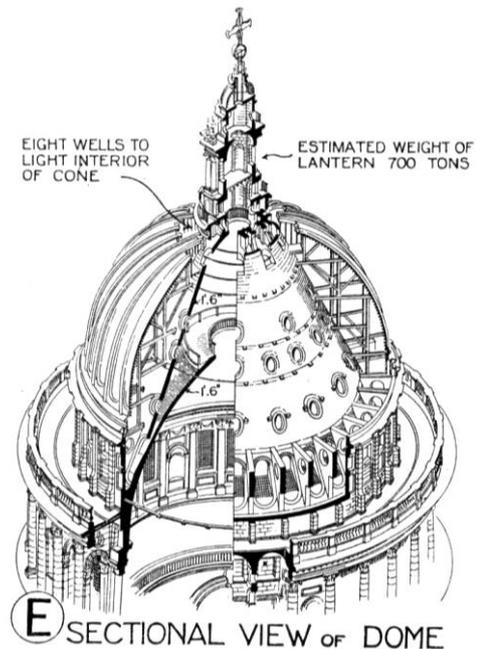


Florence Cathedral, Italy

For art-1 to take form as actual architecture, art-2 is indispensable, and likewise, the development of art-2 enables the development of art-1. One example of this is the design of the *St Paul's Cathedral* by *Sir Christopher Wren* which used a theory of catenary curves which became popular when designing arches in the beginning of the 18th century (art-2→art-1). The design of this cathedral's dome uses double layered dome structure which enables the dome to look its best from both its inside and outside by making one dome on the inside and one dome on the outside, supporting the outer dome with a conical structure built on the top of the inner dome (art-1→art-2). In this way, art (a combination of art-1 and art-2) reflects culture, and architecture reflects art.



St Paul's Cathedral, UK



However, there is one factor that we must consider when saying this. The factor is the restrictions that are imposed upon architects by their patrons. Architects are always dependent on their patrons in financial terms,

and their interference may prevent architecture from reflecting prevailing art and culture. For example, *Michelangelo* accepted his invitation from Rome and spent the rest of his life there partly because of the influence of the conservatives in Florence.

In modern times, too, there are some restrictions such as the restrictions over the designs of buildings of *Kyoto* (Japan) which exist for the purpose of protecting its unique views. Modern architects still have to abide by these restrictions to make a living, but they do not have to do so as much as in the past and are now able to make unique and novel architecture to some extent, and this has enabled architecture to give rise to new styles or cultures. For example, the city of *Le Havre* (France), which was completely destroyed during the World War II, was rebuilt by French architect *Auguste Perret* (“the father of concrete”), according to his futuristic plans which exert influence on modernism architecture around the world. This was because the rebuilding plan was a successful integration of

urban planning traditions and a pioneering implementation of modern developments in architecture, technology, and town planning, based on the unity of methodology and system of prefabrication, the systematic use of a modular grid and the innovative exploitation of the potential of concrete.



Le Havre, France

On the whole, our view is that architecture reflects art (art-1 and art-2) and culture almost perfectly, and in modern times, culture has come to reflect architecture in reverse.